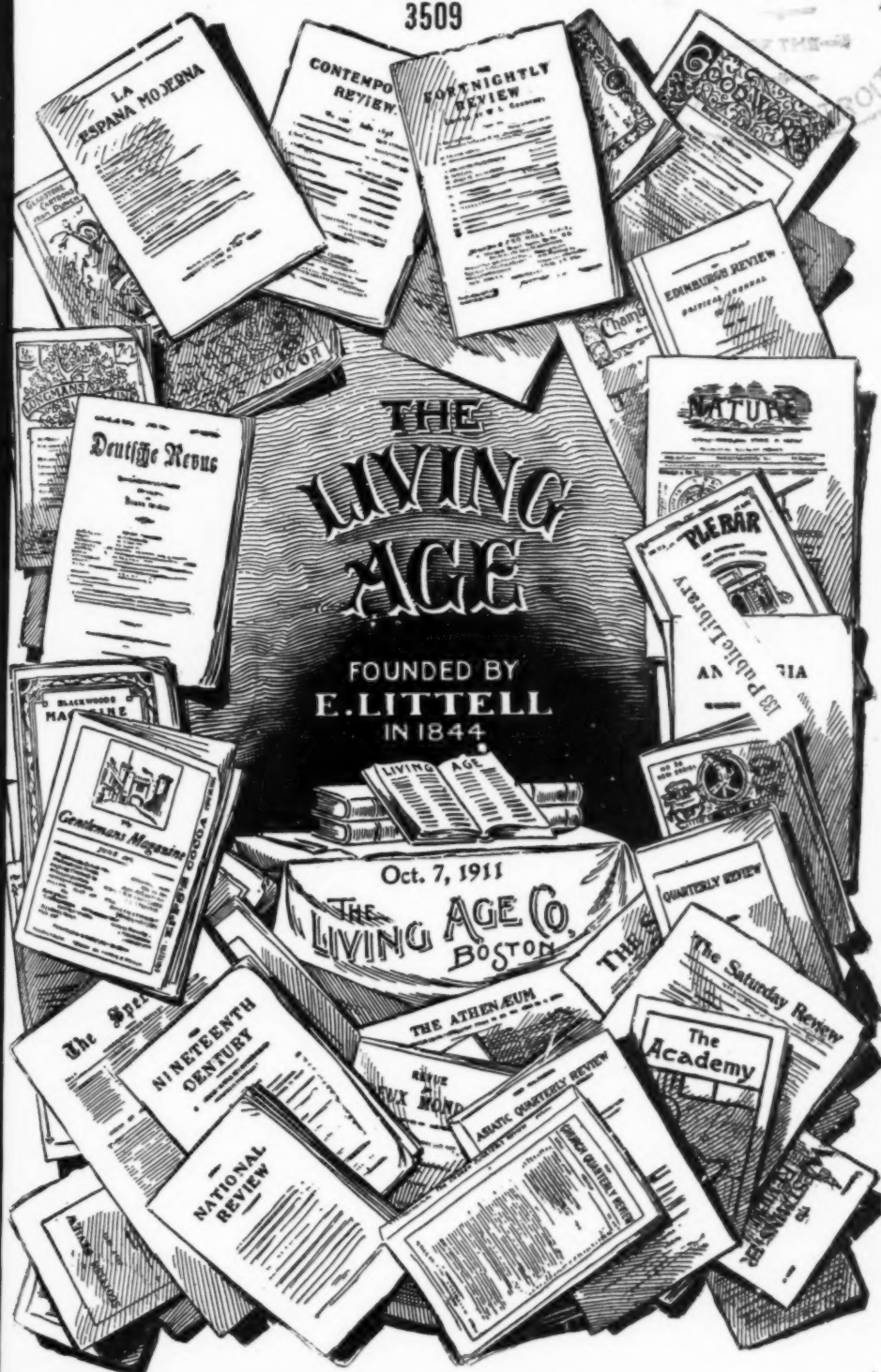


THE END OF THE BEGINNING. By Sydney Brooks.

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THE LIVING AGE.

SEVENTH SERIES
VOLUME LIII.

No. 3509 October 7, 1911

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VOL. CCLXXI.

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PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY

THE LIVING AGE COMPANY,

6 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION

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THE GREY COMRADES.

Out of the dust of cities and the din
of men

I come to the clean spaces of the
wide windy moors,

Saying: "Glad, O my kindred, I come
hither again,"—

Saying: "Hail me, my comrades, for
my heart is yours."

O voices calling and crying in the
shadows grey

Telling the dear tales over that were
long since told;

Keepers of sweet memories from a by-
gone day,

Kind, bountiful bosoms and brows
wise from of old!

Centuries long they have listened to the
four winds' rage;

They hearken the puny plaining of a
little world's annoy;

They have known earth in the making,
they live from age unto age,

Yet remember an hour's sorrow and a
moment's joy.

"Here," they say, "were you happy on
a morn of Spring,

Here sang your heart like a harp
that the wind swept;

Here are paths that are holy by the
dreams they bring,

Here in a grey gloaming you lay
down and wept.

"Years go by with their burden of
what once has been,

Here is never forgetting on the grey
breast of the moors:

Ah, the voices of friendship that were
here yestreen,

Ah, the footstep beloved keeping
time with yours."

O wise hills and tender! aglow with
beacons afar

That kindle fires of the past from
embers faded and grey,

Keeping our heart's lamp burning
through the dark hours that are

Between to-night's twilight and to-
morrow's day!

Cicely Fox Smith.

THE STRANGER.

Her door stood open all day long,

And as the men went past

They heard her wheel, her gentle song,

That said: "He'll come—at last!"

A stranger halted at the gate

One evening and smiled;

Said she then: "He for whom I wait

Is wingèd, and a child."

He turned from her with wondrous
mien,

And never a word he spoke;—

But from afar she saw the sheen

Of wings beneath his cloak . . .

Lawrence Alma Tadema.

A WARWICKSHIRE SONG.

There are no oaks in all the shires

I love so well as those that spill

Smooth acorns from their malled cups

Along the Warwick lanes; and still

The Avon holds as clear a way

As Tweed or Thames, and never
blows

The wind along a sweeter land

Than that wheredown the Avon goes.

On northern hill and Sussex down,

In Derby dale and Lincoln fen,

I've trafficked with the winds of God

And talked and laughed with many
men;

I've seen the ploughshare break the
earth

From Cumberland to woody Kent;

I've followed Severn to the sea,

And heard the swollen tide of Trent.

I know the south, I know the north,

I've walked the counties up and
down,

I've seen the ships go round the coast

From Mersey dock to London town;

I've seen the spires of east and west,

And sung for joy of what I've seen,

But oh, my heart is ever fain

Of ways where Avon's oaks are
green.

John Drinkwater.

The Nation.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING.

The first but by no means the last or most crucial stage of our twentieth century Revolution has now been completed; the old Constitution, which was perhaps the most adaptable and convenient system of government that the world has ever known, is definitely at an end; the powers of an ancient Assembly have been truncated with a violence that in any other land would have spelt barricades and bloodshed long ago; and the road has been cleared, or partially cleared, for developments that must profoundly affect, and that in all probability will absolutely transform, the whole scheme of the British State. Thus far, with their usual effective, good-humored, short-sighted common sense, with few pauses for inquiry, and with a characteristically indifferent grasp on the ultimate trend of things, have our politicians brought us. Our politicians, I say, and not our people, because one of the distinctive features of the Revolution so far is that it has been a political rather than a popular movement. It did not originate in the constituencies, but in the Cabinet; it was not forced upon the caucus by an aroused and indignant country, but by the caucus upon the country; nine-tenths of its momentum has been derived from above and not from below; the true centres of excitement throughout its polite and orderly progress have been the lobbies of the House and the correspondence columns of *The Times*; it was only at the last that the urbanities of the struggle between the "Die-Hards" and their fellow Unionists furnished the public as a whole with material for a mild sporting interest. When Roundheads and Cavaliers were lining up for the battle of Edgehill a Warwickshire squire was observed between the opposing forces placidly drawing the coverts for a fox. The

British people during the past twenty months have seemed more than once to resemble that historic huntsman. They have answered the screaming exhortations of the politicians with whispers of more than Delphic ambiguity; they have gone unconcerned about their pleasures and their business, to all appearances untroubled by the din of Revolution in their ears; they have presented the spectacle, more common in France than in England, of a tranquil nation with agitated legislators. Returning home in June after a five months' absence abroad, I was assured on all hands that the discussion of the Parliament Bill in Committee and of Lord Lansdowne's Reconstruction scheme in the House of Lords had proceeded amid a universal apathy and without a flicker of popular emotion one way or the other. The Ministerial explanation of this lethargy and indifference is that the people had no occasion to grow excited; their "mandate" was being fulfilled, they were getting what they wanted, demonstrations were superfluous. But no one who has read the history of the Reform Bill of 1832 or of the Chartist movement or who remembers the passions stirred up by the Franchise agitation and the Home Rule struggle of the 'eighties, will swallow that explanation without mentally choking.

The truth probably is, first, that the multiplication of cheap distractions and enjoyments and of cheaper newspapers has not only weakened the popular interest in politics, but has impaired that faculty of concentrated and continuous thought which used to invest affairs of State with an attractiveness not so greatly inferior to that of football; secondly, that for the great masses of the democracy the politics of bread and butter have completely ousted the poli-

tics of ideas and abstractions; and thirdly, that the Constitutional issue was precisely the kind of issue in which our people had had no previous training, either actual or theoretical, and which found them therefore without any intellectual preparation for its advent. Up till the end of 1909 we had always taken the Constitution for granted, and were for the most part comfortably unaware that it even existed. We had never as a nation, or never rather within living memory, troubled ourselves about "theories of State," or whetted our minds on the fundamentals of government. There is nothing in our educational curriculum that corresponds with the *instruction civique* of the French schools, nor have we the privilege which the Americans enjoy of carrying a copy of our organic Act of Government in our pockets, of reading it through in twenty minutes, and of hearing it incessantly expounded in the class-room and the Press, debated in the national legislature, and interpreted by the highest judicial tribunal in the land. When therefore we were suddenly called upon to decide the infinitely delicate problems of the place, powers, and composition of a Second Chamber in our governing system, the task proved as bewildering as it was unappetizing. Any nation which regarded its Constitution as a vital and familiar instrument would have heavily resented so gross an infraction of it as the Lords perpetrated in rejecting the 1909 Budget. But our own electorate, so far from punishing the party responsible for the outrage, sent them back to the House over a hundred stronger, a result impossible in a country with any vivid sense, or any sense at all, of Constitutional realities, and only possible in Great Britain because the people adjudged the importance of the various issues submitted to them by standards of their own, and placed the Constitu-

tional problem at the bottom, or near the bottom, of the list. In no single constituency that I have ever heard of was the House of Lords question the supreme and decisive factor at the election of January, 1910. It deeply stirred the impartial intelligence of the country, but it failed to move the average voter even in the towns, while in the rural parts it fell unmistakably flat. Even at the election of last December, when all other issues were admittedly subordinate to the Constitutional issue, it was exceedingly difficult to determine how far the steadfastness of the electorate to the Liberal cause was due to a specific appreciation and approval of the Parliament Bill and of all it involved, and how far it was an expression of general distrust of the Unionists, of irritation with the Lords, and of sympathy with the social and fiscal policies pursued by the Coalition. That the Liberals were justified, by all the rules of the party game, in treating the result of that election as, for all political and Parliamentary purposes, a direct endorsement of their proposals, may be freely granted. It was as near an approach to an *ad hoc* Referendum as we are ever likely to get under our present system. Party exigencies, or at any rate party tactics, it is true, hurried on the election before the country was prepared for it, before it had recovered from the somnolence induced by the Conference, and before the Opposition had time or opportunity to do more than sketch in their alternative plan. But though the issue was incompletely presented, it was undoubtedly the paramount issue put before the electorate, and the Liberals were fairly entitled to claim that their policy in regard to it had the backing of the majority of the voters of the United Kingdom.

Whether, however, this backing represented a reasoned view of the Constitutional points involved and of the

position, prerogatives, and organization of a Second Chamber in the framework of British Government, whether it implied that our people were really interested in and had deeply pondered the relative merits of the Single and Double Chamber systems, is much more doubtful. "When he was told," said the Duke of Northumberland on August 10th, "that the people of England were very anxious to abolish the House of Lords, his reply was that they did not understand the question, and did not care two brass farthings about it." That perhaps is putting it somewhat too strongly. The country within the last two years has unquestionably felt more vividly than ever before the anomaly of an hereditary Upper Chamber embedded in democratic institutions. It has been stirred by Mr. Lloyd George's rhetoric to a mood of vague exasperation with the House of Lords and of ridicule of the order of the Peerage. It has accepted too readily the Liberal version of the central issue as a case of *Peers versus People*. But while it was satisfied that something ought to be done, I do not believe it realizes precisely what has been accomplished in its name or the consequences that must follow from the passing of the Parliament Bill. There are no signs that it regards the abridgment of the powers of the Upper House as a great democratic victory. There are, on the contrary, manifold signs that it has been bored and bewildered by the whole struggle, and that the extraordinary lassitude with which it watched the debates was a true reflex of its real attitude. The point, though not of immediate importance, is of the first moment when one speculates on the possibilities of the future. For if this diagnosis of the state of public opinion is even approximately correct, if the Parliament Bill is the result of a political rather than a popular agitation, if it has been

passed in the dark so far as a genuine understanding of its provisions and of its inevitable implications and of the possible alternatives to it is concerned, if it represents no real depth of knowledge, feeling, and conviction among the masses who for other and better reasons support the Liberal Party, then the question of its repeal is brought at once within the range of practical politics. We shall need, no doubt, the sight of it in actual operation before full enlightenment comes. We shall need the spectacle of such a tremendous question as Home Rule removed from the direct intervention and the effective judgment of popular opinion and settled by the politicians with no more than verbal regard for the people they are supposed to represent, before the breadth and depth of the revolution wrought by the Parliament Bill is borne in upon the national consciousness. We shall need the object lesson of a vital and contentious issue withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the democracy and decided virtually by executive decree before it is completely realized that what has been accomplished, under cover of restricting the prerogatives of the House of Lords, is really the elimination of the British people. The Parliament Bill will perform by itself the function of educating the nation in its fundamental defect. On that score there can hardly in the long run, unless all political instinct has vanished from us, be any room for doubt or uneasiness. But is there, even now, a single man who regards it as embodying the final and definitive form that the relations between the two Houses are to assume? It is difficult to persuade oneself that the Liberals either in this or in any other Parliament will voluntarily undertake the reform of the Upper House. They have carried their main point, and with that they will rest satisfied; the Parliament Bill is the sole contribution that can be

expected from them towards the settlement of the Constitutional issue. But I should question whether even the most sanguine enthusiast of the National Liberal Club can possibly, in his calmer moments, expect it to prove other than a makeshift solution. Certainly for myself I have no hesitation in reaffirming the conviction that no one Party can permanently change and twist the Constitution of this kingdom to suit merely its own views and interests; that there can be no enduring adjustment of our present difficulties which does not command the assent of all Parties; and that after I know not how long a period of revolution and counter-revolution, of one partisan settlement enforced for a while and then repealed and succeeded by another partisan settlement, the common sense of the nation will reassert itself over the limitations and one-sidedness of faction and compel the unescapable compromise.

When that time comes it will be seen that the essence of this whole controversy is the demand of the Liberals to be placed on an equality of legislative effectiveness with the Conservatives. Lord Hugh Cecil, so far as I am aware, is the only politician of any prominence who to-day disputes the justice of that demand. "The answer to it," he informed the House on August 8th, "was quite a simple one. Whatever might be said of the proposal that different people ought to have the same opportunity of doing the same thing, no possible canon of justice or equity could say that different people ought to have the same opportunity of doing different things. To put an illustration, which was often more intelligible than an abstract proposition, it did not follow because the House of Lords passed the Education Bill of 1902 that therefore Home Rule was to pass with equal facility. (An Hon. Member: Why?) Because Home Rule was quite a different

sort of thing." There is, of course, much that might be said, and in Utopia no doubt would be said, for Lord Hugh's thesis. However composed, and whatever its powers, a Second Chamber must always have a greater bias in favor of things as they are than the Lower House. An Upper House consistently Radical in tone and opinions is almost a contradiction in terms. The function of any and every Second Chamber is of the nature of a legislative brake, and the Party that most frequently invites the application of the brake is necessarily the Party of change, of experiment, of attack, and of Constitutional amendment. No statute or scheme of reconstruction can ever in this country put Liberals on an absolute equality with the Conservatives. They may be artificially provided with what to all appearances are identical Parliamentary and electoral facilities and opportunities, but the structure of English society, the whole bent of the English mind in politics, must always prevent those facilities and opportunities from being equally available. Even in the Parliament Bill the Liberals recognize that they cannot expect the same freedom of action that the country hitherto has willingly permitted their opponents. A contentious Conservative measure in the future as in the past may still be assured of instantaneous acceptance by the House of Lords; a contentious Liberal measure will still have to wait two years before it can reach the Statute Book. In that provision there is an acknowledgment of part, at least, of the truth of Lord Hugh Cecil's contention, that the Conservatives on the whole, legislate in substantial accordance with the settled instincts and wishes of the nation, while the Liberals legislate in accordance with its haphazard and irregular aspirations, that the disparity in the outlook and tendencies of the two Parties is such

as to justify handicapping the one more heavily than the other, and that a license permissible because rarely abused in the case of the Conservatives might easily prove disastrous to the State if it were placed at the unhampered disposal of the Liberals. But the electorate and the rank and file of the Liberal Party have, I fear, scant patience with the subtleties of political metaphysics; and even men of moderate mind have been coerced into admitting that the unquestionable disabilities under which Liberalism has hitherto suffered, and the excessive preponderance of power which their control of the Upper House has hitherto given to the Conservatives, should now be wholly, or at any rate very largely, redressed. There has been, to be sure, a preposterous exaggeration of the Liberal case against the Lords, and of the magnitude of the damage inflicted by them upon Liberal measures and policies. None the less, the impartial intelligence of the country has, I believe, from the beginning accepted the Liberal claim to a greater political equality as valid and reasonable, and to that extent has approved the underlying purpose of the Parliament Bill; nor has there, so far as I have observed, been any wavering as to the necessity of re-establishing by statute the absolute supremacy of the House of Commons in all matters of finance.

It was clear from the first that, speaking broadly, there were only two ways in which the Liberal determination to be placed on the same footing with their opponents could be gratified. One, the way the Liberals chose, was so to restrict the powers of the House of Lords that it would be equally or almost equally impotent whatever party was in office. The other was to reform the composition of the House of Lords, so that Liberals and Conservatives might have an equal chance of obtaining a major-

ity in it. Both ways implied a gigantic revolution. Indeed, if one restricted oneself simply to assessing the amount of change and disturbance involved, one could not stay long in doubt that reconstituting the House of Lords was a far bigger and more drastic undertaking than paring away its prerogatives, and that the Government chose the most direct, the most effective, and the easiest method of carrying out their purpose. But in measuring a revolution from the standpoint of its benefits or otherwise to the State, one has to take account not merely of its scope, of the number of alterations and readjustments it brings about, but also of its quality and its derivative consequences, and the methods employed in enforcing it. Its size is really of minor moment. A "small" revolution, affecting only a comparatively few points in the political organism, may none the less represent a complete and violent break in the traditions and workings of a State; while a "large" revolution, covering a wider superficial area, and involving apparently a greater upheaval, may end in broadening and strengthening the foundations of government. It is nothing, therefore, to the purpose to argue, as so many Liberal journals have argued, that, revolution for revolution, the Parliament Bill is less comprehensive and unsettling than Lord Lansdowne's Reconstruction Bill. What we have to consider is the tendency and effects of each measure as they add to or take away from the smoothness, stability, and representative character of our institutions. It should, however, be premised that a moderate Liberal like myself could hardly accept Lord Lansdowne's scheme as a satisfaction in full of the Liberal claim to equality. It may be welcomed as a step, and a long one, towards that elective Second Chamber which I take to be one of the inevitabilities of the future, but its

fancifulness and complexity and the fact that it provides for the retention of a much reduced but still permanent Unionist majority in the Upper House make it impossible for Liberals to regard it as more than an approximation to their views and needs. The true comparison lies between the Parliament Bill and such a reform of the House of Lords as will make a Liberal majority in it at all times an electoral possibility.

Can anyone doubt which of these two plans is the more consonant with the theories of a democratic State and with the special characteristics of British public life? The Parliament Bill buttresses and perpetuates that very weakness in our system, which so long as it operated exclusively to the advantage of the Conservatives was the favorite theme of Liberal denunciation—the weakness which made the passage of a Bill through the House of Commons practically equivalent to its passage into law. It is true that the two years' interval provided for in the Bill, so long as it remains unrepealed, furnishes a safeguard of sorts. But the precise value of that safeguard has yet to be tested by experience. On the one hand, a Government will be disposed to yield much rather than suspend the operation of one of its principal measures for a couple of years. On the other hand, especially in the case of a Government that represents rather a congeries of groups than a homogeneous party, there is a distinct Parliamentary advantage to be gained by prolonging the negotiations with the Lords to the full statutory limit, for no faction will desert the Ministry or create trouble for it in the interval between the introduction of the Bill in which it is particularly interested and its final presentation to his Majesty with or without the assent of the Lords. On the one hand, again, the two years' grace allows time for out-

side opinion to declare itself, for bye-elections to register the trend of that opinion, and for the interests prejudicially affected by a given measure to gather round in effective remonstrance. On the other hand, the rigidity of Party sentiment inside the House, the instability of sentiment outside it, and the remorseless pressure than can be brought to bear when a Ministry depends for its very existence on the loyalty of some special group, are just as likely to make an uncompromising course the easiest for the Government to pursue. But whatever proves to be the precise value of the two years' interval, nothing can disguise the fact that under the terms of the Parliament Bill a measure introduced, it may be, under the compulsion of a determined minority, involving, it may be, a sweeping change in our social or Constitutional structure, and by its nature secure against the possibility of peaceful repeal, can in future reach the Statute Book without the electorate being given a chance of pronouncing on its provisions. That is not representative government as I understand it, but its absolute negation. Take, for example, the present position and the immediate prospects of Home Rule. It is true that in a general way every man who voted for the Liberals last December was aware that the first result of the passage of the Parliament Bill would be the introduction of a measure of Home Rule. But it is not less true that the country has not spent ten minutes in serious and sustained consideration of the problems of Irish government for the past twenty years, and that it has only the vaguest idea of what Home Rule means and of the arguments for and against it. It is also true, as the history of the Licensing Bill of 1907 abundantly showed, that there is all the difference in the world between approving the policy of a Party as a whole and approving the

particular measures in which that policy is embodied. The Liberals in 1906 had a clear "mandate" to effect a reform in the licensing system and were themselves impatient to act upon it; yet few Bills ever presented to and passed by the House of Commons have been more generally unpopular than the Bill in which they gave legislative form to "the will of the people." So it may be with the scheme of Home Rule that is now on the anvil—and Home Rule, remember, is not a mere incident of ordinary politics, is not a measure that, once passed, can be repealed; it is a project that for good or ill—in my own judgment for good—must affect the forms and machinery of the State and the whole course of British politics more intimately and deeply than even the Parliament Bill itself. Yet whatever antagonism and resentment it may arouse, and however sharply the country may realize, when it is too late, that a more or less abstract endorsement of Home Rule as an idea or principle is one thing, and approving a specific Home Rule Bill is another and very different thing, the matter will be taken altogether out of the people's hands, the Bill will be passed in whatever form commends itself to Mr. Redmond and perhaps four members of the Cabinet, and the British people will have no more effective voice in deciding one of the most fateful issues in their history than if they were medieval Venetians living under the despotism of the Council of Ten. It somewhat taxes one's patience to be asked to believe that legislation which deliberately seeks to make such a procedure inevitable is the sublimation of the democratic spirit. Boring a subterranean tunnel through all the maxims and practices of a constitutional self-governing State in order to evade, or at least with the effect of evading, the arbitrament of the people at the polls, is not democracy. Extending and

strengthening that baneful development which has already made the Cabinet the autocrat of the House of Commons and legislation by executive decree almost the normal habit of our policy, is not democracy. Facilitating the manipulation of the law-making power by minorities whose cohesiveness is the product less of political agreement than of log-rolling deals and accommodations, is not democracy. The more, indeed, the Parliament Bill is reflected upon, and the more closely its operations are studied in practice, the more clearly will it be seen that its spirit is essentially oligarchical, and that, so far from endowing the people with new powers or opportunities, it deprives them of the very right which has hitherto been considered one of the main tests and safeguards of an autonomous community.

Contrast all this with the practicable alternative of reforming with absolute fairness to both parties the composition of the House of Lords. It is a practicable alternative, but, I need hardly say, an exceedingly difficult one. The efforts of the Conservative Party in that direction may, indeed, be said to have shown that it is an insoluble problem so long as the attempt to combine the hereditary and elective elements is maintained, and so long as a Conservative majority, however small, is artificially preserved in the reformed Chamber. There is the history of innumerable experiments to show that a legislative Assembly cannot be satisfactorily or permanently constituted on a two-fold franchise. You cannot in the long run have some members sitting in it on a semi-hereditary basis and others by popular election; some life members and others chosen for limited terms; some elected indirectly and others directly; some representing special interests or orders and others representing the voters at large. In the special circumstances of Great Britain it

seems to me little less than axiomatic that a reconstituted Second Chamber must be all one thing or all the other, either wholly hereditary or wholly elective; and which of the two it will be there cannot be much doubt when even the Conservatives—with what degree of political wisdom I shall not attempt to determine—have abandoned, or at least strongly diluted, the hereditary principle, and when even the Peers themselves have surrendered the distinctive privilege that marked out the British from all other aristocracies. To such developments there can be but one climax; and though the task of framing a Second Chamber equally accessible to all parties, chosen on a different basis and probably for a longer period than the Lower House, powerful but not so powerful as to be the equal in authority of the popular Chamber, is a task of great delicacy and risk, and involves the entire supersession of the House of Lords as we have hitherto known it, it will, I fear, have to be faced. To discuss the precise composition and prerogatives of such a Chamber is outside my present purpose. What, however, I wish most firmly to emphasize is that the policy of reforming the Upper House is a policy far more in accordance with the essence of democracy and far less at war with the settled precepts of our Constitution than the forcible restriction of the legislative prerogatives of one estate of the realm by the combined power of the other two. Easy as it would be to show that Lord Lansdowne's scheme, for all its boldness, fails to meet the legitimate grievance of Liberalism, there is yet this to be said for it, that every clause and feature of it involves the abandonment of some vested interest, and widens the political power of the people without disturbing any of their existing rights. Whatever, again, one may think of the Referendum or of its applicability to

our system of Cabinet responsibility, it is undeniably a device that enshrines the ultimate theory of popular self-government. A dispassionate study of the courses pursued by the Conservatives and the Liberals throughout the Constitutional controversy shows, indeed; that the Conservatives, for all their fumbings and hesitations and irresolute leadership, have definitely evacuated their old entrenchments of political privilege, and have adopted a programme more logical and reasonable, with a greater promise of finality, and, above all, more democratic than that of their opponents; while the Liberals, for all their protestations of deference to "the will of the people," have in effect taken every pains to make the second thoughts and considered judgment of the nation inoperative and void. The difference, in short, between a constructive and a destructive revolution has rarely been more clearly exemplified.

But the advantages in favor of proceeding by way of a reform of the Upper House rather than by an abridgment of its functions are far from ending there. The former is a policy that can be prosecuted within the four corners of the Constitution; the latter was a policy, as events have proved, that could only be carried into effect by a fatal employment of the Royal Prerogative. The true objection to Mr. Asquith's invocation of the reserve power of the Crown is not that he in any way coerced or misled the Sovereign. On the contrary, his dealings both with King Edward and with King George would seem to have been characterized by a uniform and scrupulous consideration for the person of the Sovereign and the interests of the Monarchy. Nor is it that he deceived either the Parliament or the country. On the contrary, he laid his cards openly on the table; he gave ample warning of the course he intended to follow; he

even invited his opponents to settle with him at a round table Conference; and I cannot imagine, after the Prime Minister's precise and reiterated statements in the House and in the country, that any rational person, with the least interest in politics, voted for the Liberals last December without being aware that, if the necessity arose, the opposition of the Lords to the Parliament Bill would be overborne by a forced creation of Peers, and that the Sovereign had already given his conditional assent to that drastic proceeding. At no point, so far as I can see, was a surprise sprung upon either the Crown or the Legislature; at no point was the Sovereign or the country taken unawares or unfairly pressed for a sudden decision; while the attempt of the Opposition to manufacture a grievance out of the fact that Mr. Asquith last November did not resign office and advise his Majesty to send for Mr. Balfour seems to me, under all the circumstances, to reach the highwater mark of ineptitude—the circumstances being not only that no alternative Government was possible, but that Mr. Asquith's resignation would have meant first that the King had refused his request for "guarantees," secondly that the Crown would have had the appearance of throwing in its lot with a Party that was in a palpable minority, and thirdly, that the very result which all Parties desired, but which Mr. Asquith alone was in a position to secure—namely, that the action of the Sovereign should be kept as much as possible out of the controversy—would have been rendered impossible of achievement. It may as well be plainly affirmed that, given the conditions, neither the Sovereign nor the Prime Minister could have acted otherwise than they did act. The true objection to Mr. Asquith's procedure lies not in the manner or the methods by which he prosecuted his policy, but in

the policy itself. It lies in this, that he invoked an instrument that was only intended for use in the direst national emergency, when every other way of carrying on the King's Government had been exhausted or when by no other expedient could the country be saved from some appalling convulsion—that he invoked this instrument when no national crisis but only a party crisis existed, when nearly half the electorate were hotly against its employment, when the purposes for which he sought its possession were altogether factional in their spirit and aims, and when the conditions under which it was to be used could not be foreseen or precisely laid down at the time when the request for its employment was made and granted. For what was it that divided the two Parties when the crucial moment came? It was not the question of the absolute and unqualified supremacy of the House of Commons in all matters of finance; it was simply and solely the question whether the forthcoming Home Rule Bill was or was not to be referred to the electorate before becoming law. If the Government had been willing to exclude Home Rule from the operation of the Parliament Bill there would have been no need to approach the King with a reminder of his promise of last November, and the House of Lords would have sacrificed all their other amendments without a murmur. What it comes to, therefore, is that the Royal Prerogative was held over the heads of the Lords in order that Home Rule—a matter on which the real opinions of the kingdom are almost wholly unknown—might be passed without the intervention of the electorate. I hope and believe that the electorate favors Home Rule; but I am convinced that few of those who helped to return the Liberals to power last December foresaw that the creation of five hundred Peers was to be threat-

ened, or could conceivably take place, merely that Home Rule might be spared the ordeal of a popular pronouncement at the polls. The sole benefit of Mr. Asquith's abuse of the Royal Prerogative is the certainty that it can never again be used or abused by anyone. He has effectually killed it; and whatever form our Constitution is destined to assume, one may be sure that the monstrous manoeuvre we have just witnessed will never be repeated, and that no Premier will again have it in his power to bend the Upper House to his will under pressure of a compulsion that is an outrage on every sane principle of Constitutional stability.

What other course, asked Mr. Asquith, was left to him? "If the House of Lords will not give way, what outlet, what way of escape, is there open to us?" One might answer, in the first place, that the Prime Minister never tried to find out how far the Lords would give way, his invariably shrewd political instinct forewarning him of the danger of letting it be too patently obvious that the sole issue between the Government and the Upper House at the end was whether next year's measure of Home Rule should or should not be excluded from the provisions of the Parliament Bill. Secondly, one might answer that the people last December returned a majority in favor of the Bill partly at any rate because they had had no chance of weighing at leisure the alternatives to it and without any provision that the contest between the Ministry and the House of Lords would be narrowed down to the single point of Irish Home Rule; and that at no time has there been such a decisive manifestation of popular interest in or sympathy with its provisions as would justify a Government in straining the Constitution in order to place it on the Statute Book. Thirdly, and with far greater emphasis and as-

surance, one might answer that it is no defence of a revolutionary policy, aiming at a prodigious political upheaval and undertaken in the interests of a single party and its Parliamentary allies, to protest that it has produced a situation insoluble by ordinary Constitutional methods. As well might a burglar plead the right of self-defence after shooting a householder who had caught and attacked him; his presence in a house not his own would still require justification. Mr. Asquith throws the responsibility for his use of the Royal Prerogative upon the deficiencies of the Constitution. It ought, of course, to be thrown on his adoption of a policy that, if persisted in, could only succeed by a resort to such a violent and abnormal expedient. Is it not, in short, at length clear to all men that the Liberals replied to the Constitutional outrage perpetrated by the House of Lords in 1909 by perpetrating a greater Constitutional outrage of their own; that they could have secured the legislative equality they rightly insist upon if they had devoted themselves to reconstituting the Second Chamber instead of to paring away its powers; that the State to-day would thereby have gained in stability all that it has actually lost; that after all this humiliating turmoil and Cromwellian arbitrariness nothing enduring has been built up, while everything has been unsettled; and that the course on which the Liberals refused to enter is the course which the nation and all parties in the nation will ultimately be driven to adopt? The Conservatives will not be out of office for ever; the Parliament Bill is no permanent addition to our Statute Book; unbridled partisanship is not to have the final voice in determining these tremendous issues; there is no reason to despair of that Constitutional Convention, representative of all parties, to which alone from the first inception of this controversy moderate

men have looked for its lasting and equitable settlement.

It will doubtless for long be a matter of ardent debate whether the Lords were well or ill advised in accepting the Bill. From the national standpoint there cannot, I think, be much question that they did right. They extricated the Sovereign from the repulsive necessity of redeeming the pledge that circumstances had forced upon him; they warded off the unendurable spectacle of the degradation of a venerable Assembly; they saved the country, once thought to be a country with a certain aptitude for political common sense and compromise, from being turned into the laughing-stock of Europe; and they preserved the Peerage from a blow which, without wishing in any way to dispute or derogate from the ingrained and unconquerable flunkeyism of our people, must still, I think, have sorely damaged its social prestige. As Peers and as subjects of the King, those who voted for the Bill and those who abstained from voting at all earned the gratitude of their countrymen when they refused to compel the Government to proceed to extremities. Are they equally entitled as Unionists to the gratitude of their Party? The *Spectator*, which added one more to its many public services by the powerful and persuasive pertinence of its campaign on behalf of allowing the Bill to pass, acclaimed the result as "a Unionist victory," arguing that the swamping of the House by Liberal Peers would have destroyed the last chance, such as it is, of defeating the coming Home Rule Bill. And apart from the consideration that a course of action advantageous to the Crown, the country, and the whole order of the Peerage is not likely to be disadvantageous to the Party which adopts it, there is the obvious fact that Unionists as such could gain nothing from wilfully throwing away their majority in the Upper

House. But as against this there must be reckoned the bitter and deep-seated dissatisfaction of the Unionist rank and file throughout the country with the whole policy of non-resistance. In a weighty and temperate letter which appeared in *The Times* of July 27th, Sir John Rolleston warned his Unionist fellow-members that an indiscriminating public, inclined to be apathetic and with only an intermittent and superficial interest in politics—a public which has "already forgotten which Party introduced free education"—would not readily discern the difference between passing the Bill and passing it under protest, and would fail to understand why a measure that for eighteen months had been denounced on every Unionist platform in the land should be saved from defeat and rejection by the active or passive support of Unionist Peers. For the time being, at any rate, his warning has been abundantly verified. At this moment there is virtually no such thing as the Unionist Party; and one has only to read the letters and articles that are being published by scores in the more militant section of the Unionist Press all over the country to feel pretty well convinced that Lord Lansdowne's and Mr. Balfour's action has been received by the bulk of their supporters with a stupefied consternation and disgust, and that Lord Halsbury, Mr. F. E. Smith, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain recommended the policy that appealed to seven Unionist voters out of every ten. But I do not myself believe that the dissensions in the Unionist ranks will outlive the first clear summons to take up the fight against Home Rule, or that Mr. Balfour will continue to be other than the indispensable leader of his Party. There is, on the whole, small reason to fear that the confusions of our politics are going to be worse confounded by the disablement of the Opposition. I see,

on the contrary, not a few signs that after the hard shock of their experiences during the past few months the Unionists before long are likely to be revived by a spirit of aggressiveness and energy—even if it be partially the energy of despair—such as has not been theirs since the memorable fight against the Budget of 1909. And never was there a time when a strong, sane, and vigilant Opposition was more sorely needed.

With the passing of the Parliament Bill we begin a new and abstruse chapter in our politics, a chapter that in all probability will bring considerably less comfort to the Government than they expect. The House of Lords is atrophied; the hereditary principle is dead, or, if you like, has committed suicide; the historic balance of the Constitution has been perverted; the House of Commons has raised itself to a predominance it has only once before, and then to the grievous harm of the nation, reached in British history. The more need, therefore, since we are to live for a while under the all but unlimited rule of a Single Chamber, that that Chamber should be made as true a mirror of the national mind as possible, that plural voting should be abolished, that the grotesque anomalies of our electoral system should be done away with, that minorities should be duly represented, and that the House should be freed from the encumbering mass of local business which it has neither time nor knowledge to despatch with even moderate care or efficiency. To each of these tasks the call is urgent, and though it is hardly within the bounds of reason to expect the Unionists to embrace them all, though the Opposition must continue to suffer from its hopeless entanglement with Protection, from its lack of any definite and attractive social programme, and from the want of driving-power in its councils, yet I am confident that

the lowest point in the fortunes of the Party has already been touched, and that an upward movement has begun. Parties, it is true, flourish as a rule not on their own merits, but on the demerits and blunders and predicaments of their opponents; and however much Unionists from now onwards may succeed in getting in touch with the new democracy, their return to power must for the most part depend on the reflex action of Liberal mistakes and misfortunes and on the gathering desire of the country for a quiet time by its own fireside. And in those quarters the outlook is not, I think, so gloomy as many Unionists have persuaded themselves. There is the diffused reaction which sooner or later in Great Britain always follows on such a tornado of reforming energy as has swept over us for the past six years; there are the specific apprehensions aroused by the paralyzing industrial disorders of the last few weeks; there is the probability that the Coalition, hitherto held together with marvellous constancy by the common interest of all its groups in the passage of the Parliament Bill, will gradually lose its cohesion as each faction jostles for the reward of its services; there is the bracing certainty of a vigorous and unrelenting fight against Home-Rule, a contest from which Unionists have everything to gain, for if they win they will have scored a transcendent triumph, and if they lose and an Irish Parliament is set up in College Green, they will have the consolation of knowing that the diminished Irish representation at Westminster means a proportionate reduction of the Government majority, and by so much furthers the chances of a Unionist victory at the next appeal to the country; and in addition there is the deepening disquietude of the working man and of many powerful Labor interests at the prospect of compulsory insurance. All

these are assets or opportunities of more than a little promise if only the intelligence is forthcoming to turn them to account, if only the Unionists, as they have shown of late some signs of doing, will leave the ramparts of privilege and property and throw themselves boldly and frankly upon the people, from whom alone they can derive any lasting strength. No Party had ever a louder or more thrilling summons to save the nation by first of

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all regenerating itself, for upon the Unionists is laid the high and fortifying duty of rectifying the perilous list in the ship of State and of proving that if it is now impossible, as I certainly believe it to be, to restore the old Constitution in anything like its ancient shape, a new Constitution can still be devised on a stable, a non-partisan, and, above all, a democratic and equitable basis.

Sydney Brooks.

THE POETRY OF IRELAND. *

I

It has been said that until recent times the whole air of Scotland was redolent of song. It would be equally true to say that the whole air or Ireland was redolent of song, but not song of the ballad type, that type which has made Scottish song famous. We have frankly to allow that in Irish verse we know nothing so distinctive as the Yarrow poetry, as the Douglas Tragedy, as Glasgerion—nothing to haunt, as generations have been haunted by

There was a roar in Clyde's water,
Wad fear'd a hundred men.

or,

Half ower, half ower, to Aberdour,
It's fifty fathoms deep;
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens
Wi' the Scotch lords at his feet.

We think we can account for this apparent want in Irish verse, but before doing so we would point out that in Ireland's remote villages and on its lonely coasts, the everyday language

of the Irish peasant is full of poetical imagery and a truly poetic love of wild nature which proclaims him a descendant of the early Irish bards. As Mr. Synge, its best exponent, has told us, the popular imagination of Ireland is still "fiery and magnificent and tender." This tender and fiery magnificence will be found imprisoned with rare fidelity and felicity in his own very remarkable Irish plays.

Mr. Synge stands by himself in a niche in the literary Temple of Fame where there is no man quite of his peculiar literary make to compete with him. To us he appears to be a solitary *littérateur*, not to be labelled but, we venture to think, not in his own line to be surpassed. He has found a field not occupied by any other writer. That field is the heart of the Irish peasant of the remote West—a wilder field than that occupied by Lady Gregory in her charming plays. And Mr. Synge has been able to imprison the words, the thoughts, the quick changing moods, changing as the moods of

*1. "The Works of John M. Synge." (Dublin: Maunsell and Co. 1910.)

2. "Bards of the Gael and Gail." By George Sigerson, M.D., F.R.U.I. Second edition, revised and enlarged. (London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1907.)

3. "A Treasury of Irish Poetry." Edited by Stopford A. Brooke and T. W. Rolleston. (London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1900.)

4. "The Dublin Book of Irish Verse." Edited by John Cooke. (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis and Co. 1909.)

5. "A Book of Irish Verse." Edited by W. B. Yeats. (London: Methuen and Co. 1896.)

6. "Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry." Translated by Kuno Meyer. (London: Constable. 1911.)

And other Works.

children change, of the Irish poor with an almost brutal truthfulness, but a truthfulness which is genius. He has done this as no other writer has done it or can now do it without seeming to be a plagiarist. His plays will, we think, find a place in literature because the one and by no means contemptible end of the author has been achieved. He wished to give the world reality and he has done this. It is his determined truthfulness that makes his originality. He says in his preface to the first edition of *The Play Boy of the Western World* that he has used one or two words only that he has not heard among the country people of Ireland.

In reading these plays we shall be struck by the poetic love of and knowledge of nature, which is the inheritance of these sons and daughters of the wild sea coasts and the brown hills of Western Ireland. "See as clear as the gray hawks do be high up, on a still day, sailing the sky,"¹ says Timmy the Smith in *The Well of the Saints*, and no scientist could better note or describe the action of the kestrel in still weather, no poet could see more directly the beauty of the thing described. And what a quick ear for natural sounds is in the words of Martin Douli, the blind beggar, in the same play.

"Sitting alone in the cold air," he says, "hearing the night coming, and the blackbirds flying round in the briars crying to themselves, the time you'll hear one cart getting off a long way in the east and another cart getting off a long way in the west, and a dog barking may be and a little wind turning the sticks."

We hear it all and see the gathering darkness and still evening coming on, and with more delight we listen to the sprightly, light-hearted old Mary Douli breaking in with,

There's a sound of one of them twittering yellow birds do be coming in the spring-time from beyond the sea and there'll be fine warmth now in the sun, and a sweetness in the air, the way it'll be a grand thing to be sitting here quiet and easy smelling the things growing up and budding from the earth.²

It would be easy to multiply illustrations of this quick knowledge of nature and nature's moods and their influence on the changeable Celtic heart; illustrations of their power to play on these hearts; sunshine making them glad in spite of rags and poverty, the dark gray all-encompassing gloom of winter nights seeing nothing but "the mists rolling down the bog" and hearing nothing but "the wind crying out in the bits of broken trees,"³ to make them sad. "You'll be hearing the herons crying out over the black lakes," says the tramp in *The Shadow of the Glen*, "and you'll be hearing the grouse and the owls with them and the larks and the big thrushes when the days are warm."⁴ The Celtic heart responds to the sunshine and the birds, but the shadow of the glen falls over it too, and shadow seems its most abiding resting place—the shadow of the "mists rolling down the bog." "If it's ever happy we are, stranger,"⁵ says Nora, young still.

And with this love of nature there is also seen in these revealings the admiration of the beauty of the human form which seems as much part of the Irish peasant's nature as it was a part of the Greek nature. The plot and the pathos of *The Well of the Saints* turns on this characteristic and with it is joined that other feature of the Celtic mind, the dread of old age as dimming this beauty. In *The Shadow of the Glen* this pathos quite overshadows the humor which is there too, if we

¹ "The Well of the Saints," p. 65.

² Ibid., p. 115.

³ "The Shadow of the Glen," p. 19.

⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

could see it through the sadness with which it is overlaid.

"Why should I marry you, Mike Dara?" says young Nora. "You'll be getting old and I'll be getting old and in a little while, I'm telling you, you'll be sitting up in your bed with a shake in your face and your teeth falling and the white hair sticking out round you like an old bush where sheep do be leaping a gap. . . . God forgive me, Michael Dara we'll all be getting old, but it's a queer thing surely."

And while the language of these people is instinct with the love of nature, the quick response to nature's moods, and such simple and elementary feelings, we see too that something of the charm of that language is due to the fact that it is the language of a people who have few things of man's inventions and desiring: from Regent Street to Arran how far in this respect! They have nature's spaciousness around them, nature's sounds in their ears, nature's color in their eyes. How few things that are not sky or birds or flowers or mists, or the thoughts of men's hearts, are spoken of in these plays! The bit of new rope that "the pig with the black feet was eating," the fine white boards from Connemara, Mary Moul's big shawl, "for I do look my best, I've heard them say, when I'm dressed up with that thing on my head," so few things made by man, but so much that man has not made—black bog, the "grand glittering seas," the yellow gorse, hawks in the sky, and those thoughts of men's hearts when the mist is creeping down the silent glen.

In works in which the success depends and is intended to depend on showing forth the spirit of the Irish peasants' life and thoughts of life, literary form and construction is no part of the scheme, and it would be easy to point out that Mr. Synge's plays have

little or no variety in them, and that they are deficient in plot. But the plays of the most tragic of the Greek poets were deficient in this respect also, and there is something more valuable than plot, less artificial, more human, more arresting. It is the fateful note running through the whole: man's will overruled by something above and outside of it—"the counsel of Zeus being accomplished."

Nowhere is this seen so well and to greater effect than in *Riders to the Sea*, which to our mind stands first of Mr. Synge's plays. It is a story of the islands off the west coast of Ireland where the triumphant sea shadows and dominates human life. In its cruelty, in its awe, in the powerlessness of man to withstand it, the sea is a type of fate and too often is fate itself. *Riders to the Sea* has in its texture all the old Greek solemnity, and the shadow of a fatality not to be eluded. Maurya has lost a husband and four sons on that relentless coast and is awaiting the recovery of the body of a fifth son, Michael, who is drowned far away off Donegal. In the midst of this dread, Bartley, the last son, goes off to the Galway horse fair to sell the red mare and the gray pony, goes in spite of his mother's request to him to stay. The shadow of impending fate is over Bartley as he comes in "sadly and quietly" to look for the bit of new rope that the pig with the black feet was eating, to make a halter for the gray pony. The rope hangs by the white boards, "the finest white boards you'll find in Connemara," which Maurya has got for the coffin of Michael. Bartley takes the halter for the gray pony, that pony which half an hour after drags him to his death in the sea.

And Bartley goes without his mother's blessing. "He's gone now," she

* Ibid, p. 21.

"The Well of the Saints," p. 66.

* Ibid, p. 124.

* "Riders to the Sea," p. 36.

cries, "God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world."¹⁰ When urged by Kathleen to follow him to the boat and say, "God speed you, the way he'll be easy in his mind," she goes but returns to say with Shakesperean abruptness and distinction: "I seen the fearfulest thing."¹¹

Then she tells how she has seen her two sons, the dead Michael and the living Bartley together, Bartley riding the red mare and Michael "with fine clothes on him and new shoes on his feet" and he "riding and galloping" on the gray pony which Bartley is leading.

Then the women know that fate is coming fast and they await it. "They're carrying a thing among them, and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones," says Nora.

Fate has now done its worst. Life has no more to give of sorrow. No worse thing can come to Maurya. "They're all gone now and there is not anything more the sea can do to me," she cries.

Ah me! And is it come, the end of all, The very crest and summit of my days?

I go forth from my land. . . .¹²

But in that exclamation of a common woe the semblance between the Greek mother and the Celtic mother ceases. Contrast is then the only relation.

Why call I on the Gods? They know, they know,
My prayers, and would not hear them long ago.¹³

cries the Greek woman.

"They're altogether this time and the end has come," says Maurya, in as

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 37.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 43.

¹² Gilbert Murray, "The Trojan Women," p. 74.

¹³ Ibid. p. 74.

tragic a cadence but with no railing on fate or on Gods who did not hear, "may the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch and Stephen and Shawn, and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one that is left living in the world."¹⁴

It is a cadence caught from old and beautiful rituals and from that belief in an overmastering fate against which no man can strive.

"She's quiet now and easy," says Nora, "but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael."¹⁵ But it was Nora's ignorance of grief's power that spoke. It was not in her youthfulness to know that the knowledge that the worst has come and that all fitful joy, all hourly care, is for ever over, can bring rest—the joyless rest of a dead heart.

"They're all gone now and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises and they hitting one on the other. . . . It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying, but it's a great rest I'll have now and it's time surely."¹⁶

This is real tragedy and tragedy of a very high order, simple, direct, classical in concise appeal to sympathy. And as direct and as appealing are the concluding words of the play, still from Maurya.

Michael has a clean burial in the far north by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin

¹⁴ "Riders to the Sea," p. 51.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 49.

out of the white boards and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.

Riders to the Sea is undoubtedly the most tragic of the series of Irish plays, although the tragedy is wrought by simple means. But although none of the others can be called tragedies, there is sadness over them all. We nowhere meet the wild fun which Mr. Synge has described in some of his prose sketches. And yet the dialogue between that drunken old reprobate Mary Byrne and the priest is true comedy, although it is the natural spontaneous comedy of the moment, and neither the priest nor Mary intended it to be humorous at all. And in the last scene of the same play, *The Tinker's Wedding*, where the disreputable couple have been endeavoring by their Irish charm to persuade the same priest to marry them at reduced fees, and when they fall turn on him a violence which is comic, they have no thought of the fun of it all, only vengeance. And yet there is a quite Shakespearean humor over it all, and Shakespearean, too, is the close which leaves the priest master of the situation and the Tinker running from his Latin malediction with "Run, run. Run for your lives," on lips which had a moment before been declaring they had little need of the like of him.

II

When we turn to the poetry of Ireland we find ourselves confronted by much which may well be a surprise and a revelation. In the following pages a claim is made by the writer to original research. They are the outcome merely of a very real delight in the works by which such scholars as those whose names stand at the head of this article have made participation in a magnificent literature in an unknown tongue possible to the English

reader. To neglect this possibility is to be ungrateful to the labors of these scholars.

At the outset we have frankly admitted that Ireland had nothing to haunt as the Scottish Ballads have haunted many generations of men. But the truth is, that Gaelic verse is for the most part too subtle, relying for its charm, as Dr. Hyde¹⁷ tells us, "less upon the intrinsic substance of the thought than the external elegance of the framework." Or to put it in another way, the early Irish poets and their successors were, as Dr. Sigerson tells us in his *Bards of the Gael and Gail*,¹⁸ not "word-smiths" but "word-jewellers, dealing with gems." Not epics, not even ballads, but polished, highly finished gems are the little poems found in the Gaelic manuscripts. Dr. Sigerson claims for these early Irish poets that they introduced rhyme into European literature and that they

made it the most refined and delicate instrument of artistic structure which the ingenuity of human intelligence could invent to charm, without fatiguing the ear, by the modulation of sound. They avoided in Gaelic the tinkle of repeated words regularly recurring at the ends of lines. They had echoes and half echoes of broad and slight vowels, and of consonants, differentiated into classes so that it was not necessary to repeat even the same letter, and these echoing sounds, now full, now slender—rising, falling, replying, swelling, dying, like the echoes at Killarney—come at varied intervals, not merely at the close, but within and between the lines. They constitute Word-music.¹⁹

For a very full and delightful study of the subject we must refer our readers to the work from which these words are taken, and for a history of Irish literature to Dr. Douglas Hyde's

¹⁷ Douglas Hyde, "A Literary History of Ireland." (T. Fisher Unwin, 1906), p. 275.

¹⁸ "Bards of the Gael and Gail." (T. Fisher Unwin, 2nd edition 1907), p. 22, Preface.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

volume to which we have also referred, and must glance briefly at the poems themselves. Dr. Sigerson in *Bards of the Gael and Gall* has placed his examples of Irish verse so far as possible in chronological order, though that chronology has to be obtained not by authenticated dates but by internal and other evidence.

In the three short poems in the first division of Dr. Sigerson's book, we are taken back to a prehistoric period, but even here we find surprising specimens of word-music, musical in its strangely elaborated verse structure, musical in what it brings before us. In the first poem the last word of each line rhymes with the first word of the next. The second poem given its rhymeless, but it is a vehement heaping up of epithets and ideas, quick with that exulting love of, and almost participation in, the life of nature which is still so essentially a mark of the Celt of to-day. Following on these poems of almost unknown date are a selection of poems of the so-called Cuchulainn period, a period which, roughly speaking for the purpose of classification, covered the first two centuries after Christ.

And here also we find true poetry and modernity of thought as in the two beautiful lines in Cuchulainn's lament for Ferdiad:

Yesterday a Mountain he,
But a Shade to-day.

When we come to Dr. Sigerson's Fionn Period of Song, two hundred years later than the Cuchulainn period, we again find the poets immersed in the heart of nature and recurring to its images with the care of those who not only live close to it, but see its beauties with that inward eye, "which is the bliss of poesy."

In the poem of "Dawn of Summer," a quick succession of delightful images is presented to us: swallows skim over the stream, bog-cotton

waves, cuckoos call, the sleeping sea sighs. The little eight-lined poem of this period on Winter is a favorite with translators, for we find it both in Dr. Sigerson and in Dr. Kuno Meyer's delightful little volume of *Ancient Irish Poetry*, which sends us back to many another of his works with fresh delight. Both translations have caught the cold, the misery, of winter in an age when there was, indeed, highly cultivated versifications, but not much material comfort. The gray geese in that sky charged with snow, the withered, shapeless bracken in the hills, the sun so low on the horizon, and so few hours visible—winter, winter in all its gloom and its might, the winter of a thousand years ago is before us in a poem of only eight lines in all. The "Song of Winter," given by Dr. Kuno Meyer,²⁰ is resonant with the same chill and we feel that these old poets possess the art of creating atmosphere around their readers; that they are "poets," makers, indeed. We shiver under the magic of this song of a winter of the tenth century: we expand in the triumph of its summer. In the poems of the Ossian age we find another delightful winter song where the ruffian soldier finds solace in recalling

Many men have I made still
Who this night are very chill.²¹

This delight winter cold brings to his savage old heart.

To his fifth division, the Christian Dawn, Dr. Sigerson relegates St. Patrick's well-known poem "The Guardsman's Cry," or "The Deer's Cry," as it is also called, which is perhaps the best known of all ancient Irish poems, though not always, alas, in the best of translations. But of these early Christian songs surely the most beautiful is the "Hermit's Song" in Dr.

²⁰ "Ancient Irish Poetry," p. 57.

²¹ Sigerson, "Bards of Gael and Gall," p. 146

Kuno Meyer's little volume.²² The Irish hermits, like those on the Umbrian hillsides, seem to have lived not alone but in what has been called sociable loneliness. The hermit in his poem asks for twelve men around him, a pleasant church with its linen altar apparel, "a dwelling for God from heaven," and for husbandry he asks fragrant leeks, hens, salmon, trout and bees.

But for pathos, pathos deep as the Irish heart, such as finds a voice in this poetry through all the centuries, look at "The Deserted Home," a poem probably of the eleventh century, so Dr. Meyer tells us. It is translated by Dr. Sigerson with its verse and rhyme melodies: by Dr. Meyer without any attempt "at either rhythm or rhyme," which is the method he has adopted throughout his translations in this work.²³ Both methods are useful to those who cannot read the poem in the original; and a comparison between the two shows how near the original both translators have come in their different ways. The poem which Dr. Sigerson calls "The Ruined Nest," Dr. Meyer "The Deserted Home," is worthy of study. A blackbird's nest is destroyed by ruthless "cowherd lads," and the author, with a refinement which we should have thought far in advance of the age, views the deed as only worthy of rough untamed natures. There is the note of pity for the mourning bird which Aeschylus also knew, of denunciation of the doers, and then there is the swift recoll to the poet's own grief which he shares with the wild heart of the woods, his endowment of that wild heart with feelings even as his own.

My heart, O blackbird, burnt within!
No bird now comes from out thy house;
Across its edge the nettle grows.

²² "Ancient Irish Poetry," p. 30.

²³ "Ibid. Preface, p. xiii.

Here indeed is a modern note—the man of the late centuries sees himself fore-shadowed peeping into the mysterious world around him, seeing the nettle growing across the blackbird's home, and then turning with abrupt quickness to the things which are not seen:

O Thou, the shaper of the world!
Uneven hands Thou layest on us:
Our fellows at our side are spared,
Their wives and children are alive.²⁴

Indeed again and again the most casual student of these Irish lays will be struck by their modernity of thought, while, if we have read Dr. Sigerson aright, in their skilful handling of metre and of rhyme they may well surpass modern verse. Of this latter point however, we, who are not approaching the subject from the point of view of one who can go to the originals, must not pretend to judge, and therefore can only refer our readers to the books mentioned at the head of this article. But of the thought contained in the poems, the translations of which we owe to those whose names we have quoted, we can, thanks to these translations, venture to judge, and as we have said, we are astonished at its modernity. Who, for instance, in these days of intelligence and culture could diagnose better than they have been diagnosed by the author of that triad of the early ninth century three marks of ill-breeding—long visits, staring, incessant questionings? Then how modern is the thought of the questions on the pilgrim to Rome—that pilgrimage will profit little if the pilgrim have not Him in his heart whom he seeks in the distant shrine:

Unless thou bring Him with thee, thou
wilt not find.

Beautiful, too, is the thought of the little poem on hospitality: that the house must not be closed against any man

²⁴ Ibid, p. 92.

Lest Christ close His house against me.
and that the best you have must be
given to the guest, for

'Tis not the guest that will be without
it

But Jesus, Mary's Son.

Dr. Kuno Meyer tells us very truly that the religious poetry of the ancient Irish gives us a "fascinating insight into the peculiar character of the early Irish Church which differed in so many ways from the rest of the Christian world."²⁵ He tells us in the same place, what we have already noticed both in the Irish peasant of today and in this old poetry, that to "seek out and watch and love Nature, in its tiniest phenomena as in its grandest, was given to no people so early and so fully as to the Celt."²⁶ And this love is shown in rapid, impressionist word-painting, "the half-said thing to them is the dearest"; and is there not the truest poetry in these lines left out, this unheard music?

III

We have only hinted at the richness and the interest of the fragments of Irish poetry from the almost prehistoric times down to the twelfth century which remain to us. From the twelfth century on to our own days, Irish poetry seems to have lost much of its charm, though we speak under correction and are willing to be proved mistaken in this estimate. But when we come to our own days, we find that there is a brilliant awakening of Irish verse. That verse is too extensive, too varied, to be criticized at the close of a necessarily brief sketch of a large subject. We can do little more than direct our readers' attention to it, if indeed it is not already known and loved by them as it deserves to be. The Preface to Mr. Stopford Brooke's *Treasury of Irish Poetry* is a very valuable

²⁵ "Ancient Irish Poetry," Preface, p. xii.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

study on that literature and its history. Mr. Stopford Brooke says truly that this later Irish poetry—poetry that is of Ireland, but chiefly in the English tongue—is marked by a pride which is

different from English pride. It is the pride of the will unconquered by trouble, of courage to endure ill fate to the end, of the illimitable hope for the future which is a child of the imaginative powers. Nor is her national poetry of victory and joy, but of defeat and sorrow and hope.²⁷

Here is the key to many a poem in both the collection made by Mr. Stopford Brooke in 1900, and the later Irish anthology, *The Dublin Book of Irish Verse*, edited by Mr. Cooke and published in 1909. Another note of this modern poetry is also referred to by Mr. Stopford Brooke. That poetry, he tells us,

is nearly always Catholic and Catholic with the pathos, the patience, and the passion of persecution added to its religious fervor. English poetry, on the other hand, is a poetry of many forms of religions. . . . But it has no specialized, no isolated religious note, because persecution, such as existed in Ireland, did not deepen its music into a cry.²⁸

But indeed much of this poetry of a later Ireland is a cry against wrong, or a subtle knowledge of human grief, when it is not wild mirth such as that truly horrible poem "The night before Larry was stretched" or Miss Emily Lawless's delicately beautiful and yet rousing wild poem on the return from Fontenoy, which begins:

Mary, mother, shield us! Say what
men are ye,
Sweeping past so swiftly on this morn-
ing sea?

We venture to say that this, if once read, will be read many times as a

²⁷ "Treasury of Irish Poetry," Introduction, p. xx.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

tribute to the joyous disembodiment which it describes.

"Jesus save you, gentry! Why are ye
so white,
Sitting all so straight and still in this
misty light?"

"Nothing ails us, brother; joyous souls
are we
Sailing home together, on the morning
sea."

Of this younger school of Irish poetry, although we must frankly allow there is no Scott, nor Burns, yet some merit attaches to Moore, who perhaps fills, or filled, the place they fill in Scotland. It is difficult to say how much of that merit is due to the melodies to which his somewhat evanescent verse is wedded and which he or his musical editor did much to spoil by the "alteration of scales and characteristic intervals (such as the flat seventh) which," says Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, "are the life and soul of Irish melodies."²⁰ Mr. Edmund Gosse said with truth that "eight or ten" of Moore's songs and ballads "defy the action of time and preserve their wild, undulating melody, their sound as of bells dying away in the distance." Among these perhaps most of us will place "No, not mere welcome" and the yet finer "At the mid hour of night." But "Oh, ye dead," which curiously enough is not included in the selections from Moore in the *Treasury of Irish Verse*, strikes a more august note than anything else he has written, and is perhaps a proof that he might have reached and kept a higher level than he has done, but for that "cossetting" by English society of which Mr. Stopford Brooke speaks in his criticism on Moore in that *Treasury*. He says very truly: "It was a society which loved bric-à-brac and Moore gave it bric-à-brac poetry of the best kind. Never was it better done; and the verse had a melodious movement, as of high-

bred and ignorant ladies dancing on enamelled meadows."²¹

This is delightful; but Moore did something more than write bric-à-brac verses.

"He did more for Ireland," says Mr. Stopford Brooke, "than we think. He made her music charm the world. He brought by his singing of the melodies (and though he had no power in his voice, he had a manner of singing which enchanted and thrilled his hearers), the wrongs and sorrows of Ireland into the ears and consideration of that class in society which had not listened to or cared for them before. It is not too much to say that Moore hastened Catholic emancipation by his melodies."²²

Here indeed was a proof of power, and after reading these words we perhaps wonder at, while yet acknowledging their truth, those other words in which the same author pronounces Moore to be "thin." It is true; and yet in the words of another Irish poet, Moore may be included among those who

Built Nineveh with our sighing
And Babel itself with our mirth.

To have helped such a measure as the Bill of 1829 was no mean achievement for a poet who still must not be placed among the first.

But this younger school of Irish song, of which Moore was no unworthy fore-runner, is too full of promise to be summarily discussed. The reader who has Mr. Stopford Brooke's *Treasury of Irish Verse*, *The Dublin Book of Irish Verse*, or Mr. Yeats' *Anthology* on his shelves will hardly need to be told wherein the undoubted charm and power of this new school consist. It would be invidious indeed to say that it has left the modern English poetry far behind, but perhaps even that boast

²⁰ Quoted in Mr. Stopford Brooke's "Treasury of Irish Poetry," p. 42.

²¹ "Treasury of Irish Verse," p. 26.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

may be allowed to one who as a child was sung to sleep by Irish melodies, yet kindly English critics.
The Church Quarterly.

FANCY FARM.

BY NEIL MUNRO.

CHAPTER XXXI.

They breakfasted that morning in a littered dwelling, for the village folk, who had helped to quell the fire, in an excess of zeal had emptied threatened rooms of furniture, and, in the way of hurried flittings, heaped where the notion took them. Pen's room alone had suffered serious damage; she wept at the havoc when she saw it in the gray light of the day, a kind of symbol bearing meanings for herself alone, and Captain Cutlass found her among the ashes guiltily regarding them, with Miss Amelia expressing the severest censure by her silence. He came in upon them whistling, exuberant.

"There's something tonic in a fire," said he; "it's as near on war as we may attain in those pampered times. We ought to have an annual one to keep us from losing the early virtues. Eh?"

The reddened eyes of Penelope stopped him; he realized an attitude of accusation in his aunt.

"I never was more ashamed of myself in all my life!" said Pen, and Aunt Amelia breathed heavily, visibly a martyr to restraint.

"Wouldn't have missed it for a hundred pounds," he told them buoyantly. "There's a certain calling forth—a stimulus—an excitation in a fire which gives me my one regret that we can't all live in cities and see other people's fires each evening. Some pleasing terror is in conflagration, eh? You saw the fine delight of the village boys? They liked it even better than the garden-party. What the world wants when it's young is bonfires—to see the ravening beast uncaged: Chinese

lanterns are all very well for timid age."

"I can't conceive how I should have been so stupid!" lamented Pen, but little comforted by his humor.

"If people *will* read in bed——" said Miss Amelia sardonically.

"I always do!" said Captain Cutlass. "The thing is, Pen, to avoid somnolent books for such occasions. A rapid action! It's the hour for breathless incident, if we're to avoid the risks of burning curtains. Never mind! It is probably the first time Reggy's poems have roused intense excitement."

"Reggy's nonsense!" said his aunt impatiently, and Pen's lips hardened.

"I think," said she, "they're very clever. They're beautiful!"

"Of course they are!" said Captain Cutlass.

He had not learned as yet of the wounded forest. The morn was beat upon by tatters of the storm. Gusts eddied round the house, strewing the lawn with twigs and whistling in the chimneys; wild ragged clouds went scurrying across the sky. Rooks gathered in the fields with scoffing sea-gulls from the nearest port; they rose at times in the air in clanging masses. The garden had lost its tameness; every bush appeared to struggle to escape and join those elemental revels. To the relish of their meal that morning every sense contributed; they saw the boughs thrash, and the tree-tops rise and fall like billows round the village; the swollen river at its weirs resounded like a cataract; a scent of freshened earth and herbage seemed to find its

way indoors, contesting with the scorched wood odors.

All things considered, they were a cheerful party; lifted a little above themselves by the night's adventure, inspirited by the morning's weather; only Pen was contrite, Miss Amelia sour. Maurice should have basked in their approval of his vigilance and gallantry, but for one who had averted tragedy unspeakable he seemed ill at ease whenever the night's events were recapitulated. Norah alone observed it.

"If you say a word," she whispered hurriedly, "I'll not forgive you!"

"Can't keep it up much longer," he muttered. "It makes me feel an ar-rant humbug," and regardless of her clutch upon his arm disclosed the cause of his embarrassment. He had been credited with the first alarm; Pen's feeling of obligation, obvious in her manner to him, gave him pain. "I did the shouting," he explained, "but Norah was the first to see the fire. She roused me, you understand. I'm sorry for your knuckles, Norah."

"And I'm sorry for your stupidity," she said in an undertone of disappointment. "You have thrown away the best part of a beautiful reputation and robbed Pen of half her admiration, and you're going to make me look absurdly silly in another moment."

"And all the time we have been thinking Mr. Maurice was so clever!" cried Aunt Amelia. "How did you waken, Norah?"

"I was not in bed," said Norah, looking with blameful eyes on Maurice.

"But we all retired together, to bed, hours before," said her aunt, astonished. "We had quite decided Andy would not come till morning."

"I thought, again, he would," said Norah, very red, "and decided to wait up for him. So I returned downstairs and stayed till he appeared, a

benevolence for which he has to thank me, since Fancy Farm might have been burned about his ears if I had not seen the flame from the west wing on my window-blind as I was preparing to go to bed again."

"So it's Norah you have got to thank," said Miss Amelia to Pen, whose manner to the hero had impressed itself on her as rather warm.

"At all events it was Mr. Maurice who rescued me," said Pen impulsively, her aspect a defiance of Sir Andrew Schaw's theories of gratitude. He, on his part, seemed at once immersed in contemplation, with his eyes upon his cousin.

She turned uneasily to Maurice. "I hope you are glad now that I gave you the opportunity," she whispered.

"You think of everything," he said to her humbly.

"My wits have been on edge for weeks; I *have* to think of everything; amn't I a woman? But it was not altogether to give you the joy of rescuing Pen I sent you to her door; I was afraid myself; I was afraid!"

Cattanach appeared before their breakfast ended; he brought from every part of the estate along the coast the tidings of devastation. At once Sir Andrew mounted and was off, the fire forgotten, but a vision in his mind of Norah standing in the hall to welcome him from the storm, of all the household she alone solicitous.

He had mourned the fallen comrades and returned to Clashgour Farm where his mare was stalled, when the ravage of the storm appeared of little consequence compared with that which was created in his breast by a foolish sentence from the lips of Fleming.

Together they were leaning on a dry-stone dyke before the steading, looking upon a flooded meadow whose condition made the farmer even less urbane in manner than was his wont. To him the spoiling of the woods was of less

account than the loss of a stack of hay that was now on its way to sea, swept off by the river spate. He snuffed with his ivory ladle without the usual courtesy of the proffered box, and talked of the ruined plantings as if they were a blessing in disguise.

"No' much to complain o', laird! A windfa', a perfect windfa'! It's time thae trees were doon in ony case; noo ye can turn them into money. It's no' as if the hale jing-bang were sallin' doon the river like my stack."

"I would rather have my trees," said Captain Cutlass sadly, as he turned about to get his horse. "And misfortunes never come single; you'll have heard about the fire?"

"Yes," said Clashgour indifferently. "It's a mercy it's nae waur, and that naething happened to Miss Colquhoun to put aff the waddin'."

"The wedding!" said Sir Andrew, stopping. "What wedding?"

His tenant fortified himself with another snuff: a man made coarse by his convivial habits, the delicacies of perception blunted, he had long since lost the instinct to refrain from a dangerous familiarity.

"Naeboddy should ken that better than yoursel', Sir Andrew," he replied, with a cunning leer. "The clash o' the country's sayin' she played her cairds gey weel to nab a landlord."

Next moment Captain Cutlass had him by the collar and shook him like a rat. "Yon blackguard!" he exclaimed. "To say such a thing about a lady!"

"Lord keep us, laird!" gasped Fleming, "I'm no' misca'in' her. If it comes to that, I was nabbed mysel', and I'm no' regrettin' 't."

Incapable of answer, Captain Cutlass left him. The tempest of the mind awakened thus prevailed until he reached the village. From the lips of Norah the hint that Pen's tuition had occasioned chatter, though enough to make him bitterly regret his scheme,

was not so overwhelming as this brutal revelation. Pen was more the victim of his whim than he had first imagined. . . . And Norah had waited up for him—the home personified, the soul of the hearth; that dream he had one time told her of, revived by her living presence when he came from the storm into the warm-lit hall. . . . Brave Pen! Honest Pen!—in all respects so close upon his own conception of the perfect woman, how must he atone for the consequences of his folly? His errant sense of honor promptly gave an answer.

If Mr. Birrell was capable of surprise at any act of Captain Cutlass, he had occasion when his client, having trotted up to the office door a little later, fastened his mare to a ring worn thin by his litigious grandfather before James Birrell was born, and burst into the writing-chamber with the question, "Mr. Birrell, am I well enough off to marry?"

The Writer, who had seen him earlier in the day in the huddle of Fancy Farm with his mind preoccupied with other things than matrimony, thrust his glasses back upon his forehead, peered at him under shaggy eyebrows, rubbed his hands, and gave a pawky smile, in which were blended pity, fellow-feeling, and amusement.

"It's a point that didna bother you much last year, Sir Andrew, when the topic was discussed between us in this very room," he answered. "I'm glad that such a humdrum commonplace consideration has occurred to you at last. Famous, man, famous! You see romance itsel' must come back at last to a question o' bawbees. If you had half as much interest in your own pecuniary affairs as Miss Grant has gotten, you would know that Schawfield was never in a better state to warrant such a step as you suggest. I thank the Lord for Athabascas! And now I hear the very winds are blawin' in

your favor. What's the good o' me keepin' books if you'll no' take the trouble to understand them?"

He moved to a deed-box stamped in gilded letters with the name of the estate.

"For Heaven's sake don't go into that again!" said his client hastily, pushing the deed-box back on its rack with a thrust of his riding-crop. "This thing ought to be in the family mausoleum. Full of ghosts, man, full of ghosts! All I want to-day is an assurance from my man of business that I'm not insolvent. I have the utmost confidence in your judgment."

The Writer sighed and sat down again. "And yet folk wonder at de faulting lawyers!" he remarked. "My trade exists on the presumption that the world's dishonest, and that every man's a rogue, unless his name is on a parchment, stamped, and yet you'll put such confidence in a lawyer that you'll never fash yourself to check his documents. It's a marvellous compliment to my profession, but whiles I can't deny to myself that it's idiotic."

"I'll risk it," said Captain Cutlass.

"Yes, yes! you'll risk it! You'll risk anything, Sir Andrew—that's the worst o' you! But it's no' a way that's justified by reason," Mr. Birrell insisted.

"We are driven to all our vital acts," replied the baronet, "by forces quite outside our reason."

"Indeed!" said his agent dryly. "Even marriage, the most vital act of all?"

"Even marriage," agreed his client. "You'll admit I never attached a vast importance to ratiocination. Nature knows best what we're fitted for, and I'm almost come at last to your philosophy that it's women who make the matches."

James Birrell chuckled. "And what for no'?" he asked in the homely idiom. "It's no disgrace to the man that he should come like the mavis from the tree to his natural charmer. And am I

to congratulate you, Sir Andrew?"

"That remains to be seen," said the baronet. "I have yet to consult the lady."

His old friend smiled again and looked at him with a father's eye. "It's almost necessary," he remarked with irony. "Just *pro forma*, you understand. *Pro forma*!"

"I'm not so sure," said his client. "It's a point that's extremely doubtful, to judge from the lady's manner," and again James Birrell chuckled.

"I'm up in years," he said, "and I've just been an observer, taking no share in the game mysel', but I always understood that coyness was a part of it. Hoots, man! get awa' wi' ye!"

Sir Andrew walked about the room restlessly, surprised in some degree at his agent's sympathetic humor. "A year ago you would have called the project sheer romantics," he remarked.

"A year ago your mood was not so sensible: you were then for training fish to swim tail foremost."

"Not a word about that presumptuous folly!" said Sir Andrew. "It's a painful subject. I find it has not escaped the observation and the comment of the village gossips. An inquisitive and babbling place, Mr. Birrell!"

"In that respect it's just like other places," said the lawyer, up in arms for his native village. "Remember your position, sir—you're no' an ordinary man! you're like a steeple standing up in the midst of us, and a steeple canna grumble if it's stared at."

"To see how goes the weather-cock," said Captain Cutlass with a smile, as he made to leave the writing-chamber.

"Well, I hope the move I contemplate will meet with their kind approval."

"I can guarantee you that," said Mr. Birrell heartily, with his hand upon the door to show him out.

"I am glad you have come to my view of it, that what we comically call race and fortune on the lady's part are

not essential," said Sir Andrew. "But not a word to any one in the meantime. You understand the situation: after all, it may come to nothing," and he left the lawyer, quite astounded, on the threshold.

James Birrell stood for a moment like a man of stone, all the pleasure roused by his misconception of Sir Andrew's project dissipated. His wish had been the parent of his thought, which had been nursed assiduously by Tilda. Was it possible that that amazing woman's faculty for probing to the heart of local things with little more than glimpses from her window had at last betrayed her! For weeks she had been more and more convinced each day that the Hunt was ending as she wished it; innumerable portents which had missed the observation of her neighbors had conferred on her a pleasure that could not have been exceeded, as she told her brother, by the capture of a husband for herself.

He respected his client's wish for secrecy on the subject, but he was unable to forego the melancholy pleasure

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of a douche to his sister's confidence.

"I suppose you are still of the idea that his lordship's bound to make a match of it with Norah?" he said to her at their midday dinner.

"I seldom had more than the smallest doubt of it," she answered calmly, "and never a doubt of any kind since Mr. Maurice came up the wynd wi' Watty Fraser's gander, lookin' like a goose himsel'. He'll have a jauntier step, I'll warrant, now that Miss Colquhoun is in his reverence for savin' her this mornin'."

"There's aye the chance that Sir Andrew may forestall him," said her brother cautiously. "He's just the man who would think himself bound to marry her because such a thing was rumored."

Miss Tilda laughed derisively. "He may think what he likes," she said, "but I ken better. You men! You men! Indeed I wouldna wonder if he hasna found out yet that he's daft for Norah. All the same, James Birrell, you may take my word for it that he's goin' to marry her."

(To be concluded.)

THE DANGER AHEAD.

Politicians who took an active part in the recent political struggle necessarily regarded the passing of the Parliament Bill as an episode in party warfare. The Liberals were striking down their hereditary foes: the Unionists were losing the support of a body which had never failed to back the Unionist Party. This party aspect of the question largely explains why the country as a whole displayed so little excitement over a constitutional change of such far-reaching importance. For the average Englishman, except at election times, is to a large extent indiffer-

ent about party politics. He has a shrewd suspicion that the members of both parties are playing a game of their own, and their hits and misses do not greatly concern him. But there is a further and more important reason for the popular indifference which formed so striking a contrast to the political excitement, namely, the widespread conviction that the issue was inevitable, because the people had grown tired of the peers. As Lord Ribblesdale with humorous candor remarked in the final debate in the House of Lords: "My Lords,—The fact of the

matter is that the constituencies do not care about us." They do not care because the nation has outgrown aristocratic forms of government.

That is not a feature of our country only. In every European country the powers of the aristocracy are being weakened. So long as the masses were untaught and ignorant, it was impossible that they should take any real share in their own government. They had to submit to external authority, because they had neither the knowledge nor the intelligence to govern themselves. The wide diffusion of education has rendered forms of government based upon these conditions out of date. We now have so to frame our political systems as to meet the fact that an enormous number of people, possibly indeed the majority of our present population, are capable of forming some sort of judgment upon the problems of government, and are at the same time eager to take some part in public affairs. Even were it desirable, it would be impossible permanently to exclude such people from a voice in the government of their country. Our business is not to repine for the past, but to accept democracy as a necessary fact, and to try to remove its defects and to obviate its dangers.

All forms of government have their defects; and if we, looking back, now see or fancy we see some very great advantage in preceding forms of government, we may be sure that our ancestors saw even more clearly the defects of those forms of government, or they would not have exerted themselves, often at the cost of prolonged suffering and much bloodshed, to effect a change.

What then is the principal danger we now have to face? What are the wrongs which our generation has to redress? I submit that the most serious danger now in prospect is the destruction of those essential human liberties

for which our ancestors fought and suffered. As has often been pointed out before, the principal defect of democratic government is its disregard for individual liberty. This defect is all the more striking because the revolt against despotism and oligarchy has generally been inspired by an appeal for liberty. The theory both of monarchy and of aristocracy is that the rulers know better what is good for the people than the people themselves know. The people resent that theory, and demand liberty to conduct their own affairs in their own way. For the sake of liberty they demand the right of self-government; but, as soon as they have obtained that right, they at once proceed to use their new powers to destroy liberty.

So far as our own country is concerned, this change of outlook has been effected within the lifetime of the present generation. As long as the Liberal Party was engaged in trying to secure an enlargement of the rights of self-government for the benefit of the masses of the people, its constant appeal was to the principle of liberty. Now that this work has been in the main accomplished, the Liberal Party has forgotten its old traditions of liberty, and is engaged in trying to impose various restraints upon the liberty of the masses while simultaneously attacking the institution of property, which is itself an essential bulwark of individual liberty. Anyone who doubts the extent of this contrast may be recommended to study again an oft-quoted passage from a speech delivered by one of the most typical of Liberal statesmen of the last generation. Speaking at Oxford in 1873 Sir William Harcourt said:

A Liberal Government tries, as far as the safety of society will permit, to allow everybody to do what he wishes. It has been the tradition of the Liberal Party consistently to maintain the doc-

trine of individual liberty. It is the practice of allowing one set of people to dictate to another set of people what they shall do, what they shall think, what they shall drink, when they shall go to bed, what wages they shall get and how they shall spend them, against which the Liberal Party has always protested.

So completely has the attitude of the Liberal Party changed in the thirty odd years that have since elapsed, that few modern Liberals are even aware that Sir William Harcourt, in the passage quoted, was giving expression to what was then the creed of the whole party.

No special blame attaches to the Liberal Party for having thus completely changed its creed. The change which has taken place is due to the altered outlook of the greater part of the electorate. It has been forced upon Liberals rather than consciously and voluntarily adopted by them. The opposing party is subject to exactly the same influences; and at the present moment it is not easy to discover any trace of real enthusiasm for individual liberty in either of our two great political parties. Both parties are pursuing a policy which is a negation of the principles of individual liberty and self-help upon which the greatness of the Empire has been built. Both are teaching envy of others instead of exertion of oneself.

Simultaneously there has recently been a decline in that spirit of mutual toleration of divergent opinions which has so long been the pride of Englishmen. The most lamentable illustration is the outbreak of polemical violence in which a section of the Unionist Party indulged on the passing of the Parliament Bill. There was something to be said for the view of the "Die-Hards," that the country would have been more aroused by an actual creation of 500 peers to pass the Parliament Bill, than by the spectacle of the House of Lords accepting with quiet

dignity a measure which had become inevitable. On such a speculative question of tactics differences of judgment were unavoidable, and divergent views could be held and expressed with equal sincerity and honor. So far as personal sacrifice is concerned, it seems obvious that the greatest sacrifice was made, not by those who gratified their own sentiments by voting against the Government, nor by those who walked out of the House, but by the remaining handful of Unionist peers who, setting aside their own desires and convictions, voted for a Bill of which they profoundly disapproved in order to save their House and the country from the added disaster of the wholesale creation of pledge-bound peers. Yet some of the supporters of the "Die-Hards," and especially the newspaper supporters, poured out upon those who differed from them a torrent of vile abuse to which there has been no recent parallel. Here is a typical passage from a Tory evening paper:

For the traitors there can be nothing but hatred and contempt. We hope that no honest man will take any one of them by the hand again, that their friends will disown them, their clubs expel them, and that alike in politics and in social life they will be made to feel the bitter shame they have brought upon us all.

One may well ask what has become of the English tradition of liberty when professedly respectable journals use such language as this, and deliberately advocate the application of the boycott to men with whom they temporarily disagree.

Unfortunately this disregard for the liberty of others is not confined to political issues. Exactly the same attitude of mind is displayed by weekly wage-earners when they go on strike, and by the mob of hooligans that gives vocal and physical support to the strikers. If any workman in the exercise

of his undoubted right decides that he prefers to work on the terms offered rather than join the strike, he is denounced as a blackleg and a traitor. If he shows his face in the street he runs the risk of being attacked by howling ruffians. The only difference is that the East-end mob throws brick-bats and the West-end journalist ink. This display of violence by strikers and their friends is not of course novel. Half a century ago there was probably more violence than today, but in the interval a very marked improvement had occurred, and it was generally argued that the improved organization of labor had destroyed all excuse for violence, and had rendered possible the settlement of labor disputes by entirely peaceful methods. The great significance of the recent series of strikes is that violent interference with the freedom of other working-men and wanton destruction of property appear to have been regarded, at any rate by some of the strikers, as legitimate methods of advancing their own cause. The very conception of a simultaneous strike on all the railways of the kingdom so as to hold up the industries of the nation is itself a flagrant outrage upon the liberties of other people, and the fact that such a method of determining labor disputes should be seriously advocated by one section of the workpeople shows how grave are the dangers which lie ahead.

Such developments as these are not accidental. They spring from general causes affecting the whole body politic.

These general causes may be traced to pressure exercised first by the masses, who are increasingly conscious both of their own political strength and of the relatively small share of this world's advantages which they are able to enjoy, and secondly by the well-to-do classes who are philanthropically im-

patient with the existence of evil and misery. People who are poor, and see others rich, are naturally tempted to use the only far-reaching power they possess, namely, political power, to correct the inequalities which the operation of economic and moral forces has created. At the same time those members of the well-to-do classes in whom the sense of human sympathy is strongly developed feel eager to use what seems the quickest method of remedying flagrant evils.

We should all like to find an immediate remedy for every disease; and some people can never convince themselves that this may often be impossible. When the skilled physician sends them away with the verdict that the disease is incurable, or that time alone will cure it, they turn to the blatant quack. He always has a following both in medicine and in politics, for he promises to cure every evil with a remedy which is both pleasant to take and certain to succeed.

In the realm of politics it will be found that all these quack remedies involve action by the State, either nationally or municipally. That, in itself, means an interference with individual liberty, for the essence of State action is compulsion. There are many voluntary associations in this and in all countries, some of them highly efficient, and much more efficient than that particular form of association which we call the State, but they have not the universal power of compulsion which the State possesses. If, then people appeal to the State to do things, instead of leaving them to be done by individuals or by voluntary associations, it means that they want to use compulsion, that they want to infringe liberty.

The peculiar danger of this desire when expressed by democracies is that there is no natural limitation to it. A tyrant is afraid of his neck, an aris-

tocracy of its privileges; a democracy has nothing to fear. The people cannot revolt against their own decrees; the majority, if it be a real majority, is omnipotent. That is why democratic infringements of liberty are more to be feared than any other form of tyranny. The majority is so conscious of its omnipotence that it fails to perceive that there are moral limits which it ought to impose upon the exercise of its powers. Those limits are transgressed when the reasonable liberties of the individual are arbitrarily curtailed.

This statement necessarily lacks precision. It is impossible to say, with absolute exactitude, what is reasonable and what is arbitrary. No final line can be drawn. We have to deal with tendencies, not with definitions. What I am here dealing with is the tendency in democratic States to ignore the necessity for individual liberty. Yet liberty is both a good thing in itself and an essential requisite of human progress. Everybody wants liberty. Every one of us feels the need of it. We all want to be free to consult our own wishes, to do what we like. That does not necessarily mean that we want to be selfish; it only means that we prefer to make our own decisions, rather than to accept the decisions of other people.

This being a universal instinct, it is surely folly to ignore it—folly to try to build up a better system of human society by ruling out one of the most important aspirations of all human beings—"Nec propter vitam vivendi perdere causas." Do not let us for the sake of life throw away the things that make life worth living. Do not let us in the hope of making mankind happy destroy the essentials of human happiness.

But it is not only to human happiness that liberty is essential, it is also essential to human progress; for, when

the liberty of the individual is completely circumscribed by force of law or custom, society stagnates. The Russian "mir," or village commune, furnishes one of the best illustrations of this truth. Except so far as outside influences have been brought to bear upon these prehistoric types of democratic government, they have remained unchanged for centuries, and the peasants who compose them live in a condition of degrading poverty to which hardly any parallel can be found elsewhere in the world. The best men can not stand it. They escape from the tyranny of the commune to the relative freedom of Siberia; and there they establish farms of their own on the basis of individual property and individual enterprise. The Russian Government, perceiving the importance of this movement, has recently passed a Land Act providing for the creation of facilities for the peasantry to establish privately-owned farms in Russia itself. The movement, so far as it has gone, appears to have been a complete success; and a recent writer in the *Times* contrasts the hopefulness of these Russian peasants, working for themselves in the enjoyment of personal responsibility and personal liberty, with the condition from which they had escaped, which he thus describes:

The periodic re-allotments among the families have been conducted for years past as a village handicap, directed towards giving every man an equal chance and the land no chance at all. The result usually aimed at was that no family should reach a better position than its most unlucky or thriftless neighbors.

This description is worth quoting, because it illustrates a democratic attitude of mind which is not entirely absent from this country. Among English Trade Unionists there is a constant tendency to press for uniformity in wages; and, when a number of work-

men are engaged on the same job, there is often considerable jealousy if one is paid at a higher rate than the others. The same mental attitude largely accounts for the opposition to piecework and the "premium bonus" system. It also explains the Trade Union rules limiting the amount of work which a man may do in a given time. There is an underlying desire to set the pace to suit the slowest, so that all may be equal.

This is a peculiarly vicious example of the democratic tendency to destroy liberty. For of all individual liberties none is more important, both for the individual himself and for the community of which he is a part, than the right of a man to use to the best advantage his abilities as a wealth-producer. If he is told that he must produce less wealth than he is capable of producing, and willing to produce, not only does he suffer the loss of an advantage which he might have enjoyed, but the community loses the wealth which he would have contributed. In this case the evil is due not only to an insufficient respect for individual liberty, but also to a false view of economics. A considerable number of workmen think that they can increase the chances of employment for their fellows by doing less work themselves. The obvious answer is that, if this were true, each man would make still more employment for others by doing no work at all, till finally there would be employment for everybody when nobody worked.

The truth, of course, is that we are all employing one another, and the more we individually earn, the more employment do we necessarily give to other people; for, whether we spend our earnings or invest them, they equally create employment. To prevent the individual workman from earning as much as he can, not only injures him, but also injures working-men

as a mass by diminishing the volume of employment. The mischief wrought by this combination of false morals and false economics furnishes the strongest possible argument for non-interference by the majority with the liberty of the individual. For in every community there will always be many people with extremely vague ideas of economic truth, and with a somewhat feeble sense of moral principle; and, if such people are allowed to exercise coercive power over their neighbors, the whole country will suffer. On the other hand, where the individual is left free to work in his own way for his own advantage, his activity will in general benefit the community as well as himself.

This argument implies that the institution of private property is maintained and respected; and one of the most serious aspects of the growing disregard for individual liberty is the constant tendency to limit the rights of private property by increasing the burden of taxation. For the effect of taxation is to deprive the taxpayer of the liberty to spend as he chooses the money which he has legally acquired. Some taxation is, of course, necessary to provide a revenue for the maintenance of those public services which the collective necessities of the community demand; but latterly taxation has gone far beyond the limits which this definition would impose, and a good many "advanced" politicians openly advocate an entirely new use of the power of taxation. Socialists and so-called "Social Reformers," whether belonging to the Liberal or to the Tory camp, propose, on one plea or another, to increase progressively the taxation of the rich and well-to-do in order to secure a more equal distribution of wealth. That in some ways greater equality in the distribution of wealth is desirable may readily be admitted; but it is worth while even on this point

to note that the case for equality is exaggerated. Let me give a practical illustration. A friend of mine was recently engaged in trying to start a public company for the development of a certain industry in the West of England. The idea was taken up locally with some enthusiasm; and, in the early stages of the enterprise, he told me that he had plenty of offers from people who were willing to subscribe 50*l.* or 100*l.* "But," he added, "those are not the people whose money I want. The enterprise is too risky to justify me in taking their money. If the thing is to succeed at all, it must be taken up by a very few rich men who are capable of looking into the whole matter themselves, and who are willing to drop 5000*l.* apiece if need be."

That is a very important point of view. There can be little doubt that many of the most valuable industries in this country would never have been established if we had not been fortunate in possessing a considerable number of rich men, able and willing to risk large sums of money on new enterprises of a hazardous character. I lay stress upon this consideration, because to me it seems to prove that the present distribution of wealth is unsatisfactory, not because of the existence of a small number of rich men but because of the existence of a large number of poor men. The common Socialist theory is that the one phenomenon is the necessary counterpart of the other; and many people besides the Socialists seem to have a crude idea that the total wealth of the country is a fixed quantity, and that distribution is merely a matter of a division sum. That is absolutely false. The amount of wealth produced very largely depends on the motives that exist for wealth-production; and, if these motives are impaired, the total product will inevitably be reduced.

It is for this reason that all schemes

for redistributing wealth upon any other basis than that of reward for exertion ought to be unhesitatingly rejected. Yet the proposals put forward by sentimental Radicals and by Tory Democrats under the plausible title of "Social Reform," and supported by the Socialists as steps towards Socialism, are all based upon the theory that it is the duty of the State to come to the assistance of the poor man. It is a very plausible proposition, but we have to ask whither it leads. If poor men are to be helped out of public funds simply because they are poor, poverty will become by itself a title to pecuniary reward; and the result will be that the main motive for industrial effort will disappear.

If poverty is to be rewarded, why should anybody work? It would be more profitable to remain poor. People are fond of saying that poverty is not a crime; but neither is it a title to merit. No one urges that the community should look on callously while human beings starve. To save the destitute from the cruellest consequences with which Nature penalizes destitution may safely be regarded in a civilized community as a public service; but, when we go beyond this and tell men that they have only to plead poverty in order to obtain a share of other people's property, then we are entering upon a course which can only end in a compulsory distribution of national wealth in equal shares among all the members of the nation. Such a system of distribution could only be maintained under a despotism more absolute than any of which the world has yet had experience. For, if we take away the main motive for industry, namely, the hope of pecuniary reward, it would become necessary—men being what they are—to drive a large portion of the population to its daily work under the ever-present threat, or use, of the lash. In a word, the destruction of

private property means the establishment of slavery in its crudest form.

The best way, and in the final resort the only way, to diminish poverty and to advance prosperity is to continue to follow the path which has already led mankind to heights undreamt of in past ages. We have to remember that, though there is still much poverty in our midst, it is as nothing compared with the poverty which existed in earlier centuries. The institution of private property, steadily working through successive generations, has stimulated enterprise, encouraged effort, created and preserved capital, with the result that the comforts and enjoyments of civilized life, which in earlier ages were unattainable even by the few, are now within the reach of the vast majority of our people.

That much poverty still remains, and that it is often entirely undeserved, is no argument for sweeping away or impairing the strength of that wonderful institution of private property which has already effected so much for the advancement of mankind. What we have to ask ourselves is whether, while leaving this institution to continue automatically its beneficent work, we cannot supplement its action so as to help those who fall out by the way. My own conviction is that, if we wish to do this, we must appeal in the main to moral and not to political forces. We must teach that a responsibility rests upon the individual to use for the benefit of others as well as of himself the advantages which he possesses, whether they spring from personal ability or from inherited fortune. We have to teach that those positive laws which are necessary for the definition of individual rights are not alone sufficient for the guidance of men's actions.

Beyond and above the necessarily rigid code of positive law is a more

elastic but ultimately more potent code based upon the instinct of human comradeship; and its function is not to enforce rights but to indicate duties. The principle of personal responsibility is the necessary counterpart of the principle of personal liberty. Both are essential to social progress and human happiness. We cannot hope to preserve the one if the other be destroyed. Unless a man has liberty to give effect to his own judgment, he speedily ceases to feel any sense of moral responsibility. The destruction of individual liberty involves also the destruction of that moral sense which makes social life possible. Probably most politicians would, without hesitation, give their assent to these general propositions; nevertheless they continue to pursue a course which leads directly towards the evils here indicated. The more the functions of the State are extended, the greater is the curtailment of individual liberty, the less is the power of the individual to resist collective tyranny. In practice even the majority soon ceases to have control over the organization which it has itself created. People have their own work to attend to; they cannot afford to give more than a limited time to public duties. As a result, the control of governing bodies passes first into the hands of a minority of energetic persons, who may be well-intentioned, but who generally care more about the advancement of their own views than about the wishes of the people they govern. After a time even these enthusiasts find the task too heavy for them, and hand over to officials the duties they had hoped themselves to discharge.

This is true both of local government and of national government. Not only in the case of local government is there an ever-growing local bureaucracy, but the central bureaucracy exercises a superior power of control over the lo-

cal authorities. The result is an ever-increasing number of officials. England is becoming more official-ridden even than France. No doubt many of our officials are men of very high character, zealous for their work and for their country; but they exercise power without responsibility, and from the sheltered seclusion of their official desks they give decisions which may affect the convenience and the happiness of thousands of human beings. The permanent official, whom we endow with these tremendous powers, has no super-human qualities. He cannot see through a brick wall; he cannot be in two places at once; he cannot understand the intricacies of a business which he has never studied. Yet his power is every day growing. Not only does he control almost the whole of the administrative work of the country, but he is responsible for the greater part of the legislation which passes through Parliament, and has even begun to lay hands upon the work of the Courts of Law.

This last is one of the most dangerous tendencies of the present time. Act after Act has been passed in recent years transferring from the Courts of Law to the bureaucracy the duty of deciding important questions concerning private rights.

The seriousness of this transfer of jurisdiction can hardly be exaggerated. A trial in Court is open to all the world; and everybody is able to ascertain the reasons that determined the decision of the judge. But the examination of any question by the bureaucracy is carried on behind closed doors; and there is no obligation upon the official concerned to give any reason for the decision at which he arrives. He may in many cases act with the perfect fairness which we have learnt to expect from our judges; but he is subject to two important influences from which judges are free. In the first

place, the cases he is called upon to decide generally concern previous action by his own department; and the spirit of departmental loyalty will necessarily bias his mind. In the second place, the cases which come before a Government department very often have a bearing upon current political controversies; and, in that event, the official has to take his orders from the Cabinet Minister at the head of the department. The decision is then frankly determined not by judicial but by political considerations, with the result that the interpretation of private rights finally depends upon the arbitrary will of the majority in the House of Commons.

How, then, are we to deal with these dangerous tendencies? In the first place, we must take care so to frame our machinery of government as to make it difficult for those who temporarily gain control of the machine to impose their personal fads upon the rest of the community. At the moment, indeed, this is an even greater danger than the general tendency of the people themselves to demand increased State control. For, as our governmental machine is now worked, it is possible for a well-organized group of persons to engineer through Parliament measures to which the assent of the nation has never been secured, and to use the whole power of the State to enforce these measures. This is possible at present because of the very limited power which the elector possesses. He is limited to a choice between two parties, each of which has a fairly extensive programme. He may not like the programme of either party, but he must support one of the two. When once he has given his vote, his whole power has gone; and, if the party which he may have helped to place in power chooses to interfere with his liberty in a manner of which he

disapproves, he has no practical redress.

The policy of each party is in practice dictated by small groups of people working behind the scenes. Their motives may be entirely honorable, though even of this there is no necessary guarantee; but, whatever their motives may be, these little groups exercise through the party machinery a power to dictate to the House of Commons, and through the House of Commons to the country. Under present conditions the House of Commons, which was once a model for the world, has ceased to be a deliberative assembly. The party prescribes the measures which the Government is to introduce. Those measures are sometimes fairly debated at their various stages, sometimes they are passed without debate by means of the closure; but in neither case can any effective change be made in them without the assent of the persons who control the party machinery. If, after five or six years, the country grows tired of the dominance of one party, the electors can enjoy the satisfaction of putting that party in a minority, but they will not recover their liberty. They will merely be exchanging one set of tyrants for another. The first step, therefore, towards securing liberty is so to amend our Constitution as to prevent this alternating tyranny: and the best method of accomplishing this object is to give to the electors themselves a power of veto over every important legislative proposal.

An incidental advantage of the introduction of this popular veto would be the creation of a greater sense of responsibility both in the House of Commons and in the Second Chamber. Members of Parliament now feel that they have no personal responsibility for the votes they give. Their whole duty is to obey the party whip. If, however, every important measure were

liable to be submitted to a Referendum, members would hesitate to record their votes for measures which were unlikely to meet with popular approval. The House of Commons, in a word, would gain a large part of that authority which is now exclusively exercised by party caucuses.

Further than this, the experience of other countries has shown that the working of the Referendum is opposed to interference by the Government with the liberty of the individual. A small band of enthusiasts may, under our present system, demand a particular kind of interference—for example, compulsory closing of public-houses on Sunday; and this group may be successful in forcing its proposals upon one or other of the political parties. But, when the question comes to be put to the people as a whole, they will answer: "No! We prefer to govern ourselves." We may safely assume that any proposal for widespread and arbitrary interference with the liberty of the masses of the people would be negatived if put to a popular vote; and for this reason the introduction of the Referendum would be by itself a most valuable safeguard against the present tendency to undue interference with individual liberty.

At the same time, it is of the utmost importance so to reform the constitution both of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords as to secure a better discussion of legislative proposals than is possible under present conditions. So long as each elector has only the possibility of choosing between two rival candidates, the tendency will be for political forces to divide themselves into two hostile camps; and each camp will fight for its own hand with only a secondary regard for the interests of the country.

To destroy this purely artificial method of carrying on the business of the country, it is desirable to substi-

tute large constituencies for the single-member constituencies which are now the rule, and to give the electors, by means of the transferable vote, a wider range of choice than is possible under the present system. Men could then be returned to Parliament without being compelled in advance to subscribe to all the tenets, present and future, of a party creed. A new element of independence would be introduced into the House of Commons; and that House would once again obtain the power of deliberating effectively upon schemes of legislation. As a further safeguard, it is of the highest importance that the Second Chamber should be so reformed as to enable it to exercise independent authority, subject always to the provision that in the ultimate resort the will of the people themselves, as ascertained by a Referendum, must prevail.

These improvements in the machinery of government would give the nation far more complete control over its own affairs than it now possesses, and remove some of the worst evils from which we now suffer. But changes in machinery will count for little unless the people themselves see clearly the

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necessity for so limiting their own collective action as not to interfere with individual liberty, except where the essentials of social life are at stake. What those essentials are cannot be specified in advance. Directly men begin to live together, they must have some rules of conduct to guide them in their dealings with one another; and, as life grows more complex, so admittedly does the necessity for more complex regulations arise. The point which we have to press is that, in framing any regulations which the needs of the community may require, the mind of the people should always be fixed on the importance of curtailing liberty as little as possible, and of trusting rather to moral suasion than to coercive laws. Democracy is already omnipotent; it has yet to learn how to curb its own strength. This is a difficult lesson to learn; and it may be that our country will have to pass through many painful experiences before the mass of the people understand that there is nothing they can gain by the exercise of arbitrary power one-half so precious as the liberty they will lose.

Harold Cox.

THE TAPESTRIES OF ZAMORA.

It is by no means easy to get a sight of these tapestries or to find out anything definite from Spaniards who have seen them. I have visited Zamora several times and have noted down that they are shown during the Octave of Corpus Christi. Probably a good many people have been guilty of mentioning them in print without having set eyes on them. I myself wrote a book in which, relying on the authority of the best eye-witness available, I called them a sixteenth century series representing the War of Troy, not unlike

those of Charles V.'s expedition to Tunis in the Royal Palace, Madrid. This year, happening to be at a place about seventy miles as the crow flies—and some twelve hours by coach and train—from Zamora, I decided to go and look for myself. Arriving on the feast of Corpus, I found that the tapestries were no longer shown during the Octave, but only on the day of the Octave. So back to Simancas I went, and undertook the journey again a week later. My trouble was not in vain; I found them all hung in the

Cathedral cloisters, with the choir-boys and their allies playing hide-and-seek in and out of them, practising marksmanship on Hector and King Priam, tearing peek-à-boo holes in some of the most valuable tapestries in Spain or out of it, under the indifferent noses of Canons who paced up and down smoking cigarettes. Without surprise I heard that, no longer ago than the reign of Isabel II., the loyal Chapter had them sent to the neighboring town of Benavente and stretched over the cobble-stones that the royal cavalcade might ride over them on its way through the place. Fortunately they were rescued in time by the Queen. May her grandson rescue them again!

On a magnificent summer morning I found the entire inner wall of the cloisters covered with them. About half are indifferent or quite poor later Brussels work, but the set representing the War of Troy, five huge strips occupying over a third of the space, bears no resemblance to that of Charles V.'s expedition to Tunis, nor is it of the sixteenth century, but of the fifteenth, and probably not of its very last years. The pieces composing it are without frame-borders, dating from a time when tapestries were made as far as possible, in one piece, though frequently cut up afterwards for convenience. Along the top run inscriptions in white on a rose-red ground, Latin and Old French verses relating the episodes depicted below, and this rose-red is caught up again and again until it gives, as it were, the key-note of the whole. The slaying of Hector, the death of Troilus, the wooden horse, the burning of Troy, each of the scenes—and each piece contains several—is a variation in which the dominant note is rose-red, while many other strong colors take a share in making the composition rich and diverse. These tapestries are not enhanced with metal threads like some of the most

boasted products of Brussels, especially in the early sixteenth century, and their unity of material gives an effect of beauty and simplicity unattained by more elaborate methods. One might write pages on costumes and types, skill in establishing values by means of which fearful mêlées of armed men and horses avoid confusion, charming animals, plants and flowers introduced here and there, fanciful architecture, and, in spite of choir-boys, the admirable condition in which they have reached us. They have never been restored except for a patch here and there, nor do they offer any excuse for restoration; only the browns are going, as they always do, before the other shades, doubtless for some reason connected with the properties of the dye. But it happens that at either end of this set of the War of Troy there hang isolated pieces that afford a most interesting comparison. On one side there are two large border-framed strips of Biblical allegories, and on the other an enormous unbordered piece, measuring some five yards by nine, in which are set forth three episodes from the life of Tarquinius Priscus, fifth King of Rome.

Now, the piece dedicated to Tarquinius Priscus seemed to me not only the best of those exhibited at Zamora, but an incomparable work of art recording a great triumph in tapestry designing and weaving. Beside it the Troy series, though superb in itself, shows unexpected faults, and the two Biblical pieces betray a restless pursuit of effects much better achieved in painting, and mark the point at which the art began to lose the proud position it had held for upwards of a century and a half. Between Tarquinius Priscus and the Biblical pieces there is a difference quite out of proportion to the space of time—certainly under fifty years—that separates them. One is entirely free from the tyranny painting

began to exercise over tapestry early in the sixteenth century, the others, evidently designed by a man preoccupied by the questions of perspective and composition that were absorbing painters' attention in his day, show it in a dozen ways. Contemporaries probably liked the Biblical allegories better than Tarquinius Priscus, but today the earlier work shows immensely superior to the later precisely because it was designed by someone who had first and foremost in his mind's eye the possibilities and limitations of tapestry and cared not a fig for perspective. This man saw in terms of woven yarn and not in terms of paint. Why it was that the designing of tapestry fell more and more into the hands of people who treated it as at best the reproduction of pictures no one knows. At any rate, time has proved the earlier ideas right. I do not mean to decry the products of the Gobelins, Beauvais, or Aubusson, but either they are ornamented exclusively with foliage and formal motives or they attempt to reproduce a picture, in which case, however beautiful, they are inferior to any fine fifteenth century work, were it only for the reason that the earlier designer avoided risking too much on delicate values in flesh, skies, and distances, with the result that his tapestry looks fresher and, in fact, has felt the hand of Time much less than, for instance, a remarkable set of Gobelins of 1725 or thereabouts on show at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, at this moment.

At Zamora the two Biblical pieces serve as a foil to the older work. The Trojan set and the single piece of the history of Tarquin appear to be nearly contemporary, yet they present deeplying differences that give food for thought. They were certainly not designed by the same hand. Both show a hardy independence of notions acquired in the practice of painting, both are the work of men who never

dreamt of admitting that their art owed allegiance to any other. But the Trojan series' profusion of picturesque and grotesque incident arrests the eye and attention with every detail, whilst the other, serene and majestic, produces a simpler effect and a more lasting, satisfying impression. Its three scenes, from left to right, are: Tarquin, his wife Tanaquill, and their attendants approaching the Janiculus on their way to Rome, when the eagle snatched Tarquin's cap from off his head; the crowning of Tarquin; Tarquin defeating the Latins in battle. The whole composition is very light in color; a background of white architecture gives a note which each of the groups below answers with the most sumptuous velvets and brocades, the most delicate flowers, grasses and blossoming shrubs that ever gladdened the eye in tapestry. Here no little grinning episodes distract the attention; the drawing is of the finest quality and not without a touch of malice in the frail and lovely Tanaquill and her pretty minions in their finery, but nothing is allowed to intrude upon the balance and dignity of the whole. It is typical of the difference in temper between this piece and the Trojan series that fifteenth century Burgundian attire and pomp seem natural and becoming in one, and raise a laugh—perhaps intentionally, who knows?—in the others.

I could discover nothing of the history of these tapestries beyond the tradition that they were brought from Flanders in the second half of the sixteenth century by one Enriquez de Guzman, Count de Alba de Liste, a contemporary of the Duke, but of another house. They are certainly Flemish, and were probably made in Hainaut. When Louis XI. took Arras in 1477 he stopped the looms in that city, and the weavers retired to Lille, Tournai, Valenciennes, and other places, where they carried on their art as before. The

restraint and elegance of Tarquin's triumph at once made me think of French design, though I can remember nothing resembling it. On the other hand, delight in caricature and overloaded compositions, signs of Flemish influence, are present in the Trojan series. In the French Primitive Room at the Louvre, however, there are four large drawings labelled "French, late fifteenth century," that might almost be sketches for cartoons for these very tapestries, which follow them line for line except that the tapestries contain more grotesque detail. I do not mean to suggest that the Louvre drawings were made for the Zamora tapestries; in those days compositions were not regarded as personal property and, more

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or less modified to suit various purposes, were freely borrowed. But it is quite certain that there is some connection between them; the resemblance is much too close to be a mere coincidence, though the Trojan War was a favorite theme at the time.

There are many precious tapestries in Spain. Those in the Royal Palace are well known, and others scarcely inferior are to be found in churches and convents such as the Cathedral of Palencia and Las Huelgas at Burgos. But quite apart from its enormous archaeological importance, looked upon purely as a work of art, the Crowning of Tarquin is more beautiful than any other in the country.

Royall Tyler.

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY.

I.

The glorious full moon of Central Africa looked down upon a curious scene. The inhabitants of a little Jur village were squatting in a circle round an open space, in the middle of which a small fire was burning. On the fire, wedged between three stones, was a small earthenware cup in which some water steamed and bubbled. Round and round the fire moved Mayom, the village witch-doctor, muttering incantations and sorceries as he went. Occasionally he broke into a curious, hopping dance, twisting and wriggling his body into the strangest contortions. From time to time also he went up to the fire and poured more water into the cup, and each time that he did this he called aloud the name of some woman who lived in the village. Then followed a dead silence, and the assembled people gazed anxiously at the little cup.

For Mayom was going through this mysterious ceremony in order to find

out the name of the woman who had caused the death of the chief's infant son. It was known that the child's death must have been the work of some witch, because such was the tribal superstition, handed down from time immemorial. It was the custom in such cases for the witch-doctor to put water and the seed of a certain tree into the cup, and then to call out a woman's name: if the water bubbled and boiled over so that it hissed into the fire, all was well for that particular woman, and her reputation and life were saved; but woe to any woman if the water refused to boil over when her name was called.

On the outer edge of the circle squatted Oyid; shivering and speechless with fear, she was waiting for her name to be called out. She herself was no great believer in the superstitions of her tribe, but she well knew that the men of the village believed implicitly in them, and that if hers was the fateful name she need expect no

mercy. Already she pictured herself seized and forced to drink the fatal poison, beaten with rods, and then tied down on the red ants' nest, which had already been broken open and prepared to receive the witch.

She knew that her fate was near. She hated Mayom. Twice already he had asked for her in marriage, and had not she twice refused even to speak with him? Only that very morning he had met her in the dura-field as she was collecting the ripe corn, and once again had asked her to marry him, but she had turned away with a curt refusal: and then Mayom in a fury had told her that on that night the "gwia" was to be held, and that he would name her as the witch. The water, he had said, would not boil over when her name was called, as he would take good care not to put sufficient into the cup. In terror at his threat she had turned to him, but he had already stalked away and had refused to come back when she called to him.

When night had fallen she had pleaded sickness, in order to escape the ceremony, but her uncle, with whom she lived, had forced her to go with him to the "gwia," saying that she had nothing to fear.

And now she sat and shivered and awaited her fate.

Mayom was calling the names of the women in the order of the houses in which they lived. He had reached the house next to that in which Oyd lived: her turn came next. She could bear it no longer. Should she fly? Or should she pierce her own heart with the little knife she carried at her waist, and so avert the tortures that must otherwise be hers?

And then a sudden thought came into her mind. Only a short time before this the white men had established themselves in the country, bringing with them many soldiers armed with the dreaded rifles. They had come,

they said, to rule the land fairly, and not to extort slaves and to kill the natives as had been the practice of the Turks in the old days. Many and various had been the opinions which Oyd had heard expressed about this new government by the men of her village, as they sat during the day under the big tree near the chief's hut; but, on the whole, the general opinion had been favorable to the new rulers, and certainly the strangers had so far done no harm to the Jurs: they had not seized the women or burnt the villages. That very morning news had come to the village that a party of soldiers under the command of two white men was on its way to visit a tribe to the south of the Jurs, and was to encamp at mid-day close to a village which was only about two miles from Oyd's home.

Why then should she not test the kindness of these people, throw herself on their mercy and beg for their protection? Surely nothing could be worse for her to bear than the dreadful fate which was now so fast approaching!

Such were the thoughts which raced through her brain as, almost paralyzed with fear, she listened to Mayom's mutterings and watched his hateful contortions. Terror at the idea of a rush through the forest in the night to the unknown people, and the uncertain fate which might await her, and terror at the fearful death which must be hers if she remained in her own home, for the moment made her powerless to move.

Then the water boiled in the little cup and once again hissed into the fire. Oyd's next-door neighbor was declared guiltless of witchcraft, and a low murmur of satisfaction came from the eager watchers.

Oyd's turn had now arrived, but at this critical moment the power and the decision to move also came to her. Stealthily she crept back into the darkness—a few yards only separated

her from the tall standing dura-fields round the village. Once amongst the crops she hoped that she would be able to get a good start, as no one would expect her to have the courage to face the terrors of the forest at night and go to the unknown white men and their soldiers.

Slowly, slowly she moved backwards. Already Mayom was pouring fresh water into the cup, and by the fitful light of the flames she imagined that she could detect on his cruel face a smile full of revenge and cunning spite.

At last she reached the dura,—it was only a few yards from where she had been sitting, but to the terrified girl the distance had seemed miles. Rising to her feet, she moved cautiously and slowly away from the "gwia," fearing that the crackling of the stalks might be heard. By degrees she quickened her pace and soon reached a small track, along which she ran towards the wider path which led to the neighboring village, where the white men had camped. She had not run a quarter of a mile when she heard loud and angry shouts coming from the direction of the "gwia." Then she knew for certain that Mayom had fulfilled his threat, and had declared her to be the witch whose sorceries had robbed the chief of his child. She instantly increased her speed and raced along the path in the clear moonlight. She knew that the avengers would search for her first in her own home, then in the houses and precincts of the village, and that only when they had failed in this search would they look for her foot-prints near the place where she had last been seen. But it was night, and the ground was hard, and she knew that even the clever Jur hunter would be hard put to it to find her track.

So, with feelings of mingled hope and fear, she sped on as best she could, dropping at times into a quick walk to

recover her breath, and then once more running. And now, as the sounds from the village grew fainter and fainter behind her, a new dread came upon her.

The intense silence of the forest was suddenly broken by the sound of some heavy body passing through the brush-wood and over the dead leaves which covered the ground in front of her. Oyid sprang from the path and crouched in the shadow of a great tree until she calmed herself by the thought that probably it was only an antelope. She rose and returned to the path, and as she did so the coughing roar of a lion, about a mile away, but sounding far nearer, sent her racing once more upon her way. On and on the exhausted girl fled. Would she never reach the camp? Or perhaps she had, in her terror, missed the path? No, a well-known landmark reassured her. Then came the discomforting thought that perhaps the white men had moved, and that upon reaching the village she would be held captive and given back to her pursuers. She was almost exhausted: she could go little farther; but at last to her dazed eyes appeared the lights of camp fires and she heard the sound of voices. In a few more minutes she had reached the edge of a large clearing, and then her courage failed her. She crouched down in the deep shadow of the forest trees and waited—but not for long. Suddenly to her acute ears there came the distant sound of people running along the path by which she had come. She knew that the villagers were upon her track. Should she wait where she was and fall into their hands, or should she summon up her courage and seek protection from the unknown strangers? A moment's hesitation, and then she ran forward into the white men's camp.

II.

Clive Hellard and Geoffrey Raynor

were two young Englishmen. The former was the "Inspector," and the latter the officer in command of the detachment of the Royal African Regiment which was stationed for duty in the Jur District.

Neither of them had been in the Protectorate for more than a few months, but, by the inscrutable arrangements of those in authority at headquarters, it had come about that these two young men found themselves in temporary charge of this newly acquired district, although their combined knowledge of the language and of the customs of the people was of the smallest. They were now making a tour through the country. It was Hellard's duty to try and obtain the confidence of the shy chiefs of the Jur, whilst Raynor was there to see that no harm came to him in the process.

They had made a long march in the morning, and consequently had decided to do no afternoon trek, and to make their mid-day halting-ground into their camp for the night.

The transport mules had been picketed, fires lit, and an excellent dinner eaten, and the two Englishmen were now stretched on their deck-chairs at some little distance from their chattering men. They were already plunged in the usual African arguments. Neither of them had as yet seen an elephant, but this fact had not prevented a lively argument as to the rival merits of the head or heart shot.

The capacity or incapacity of all the senior military and civil officials had next been freely discussed, and, curiously enough, in both branches of the service the number of incapables appeared to predominate. The discussion had then turned upon the natives of the country, and their virtues and vices were carefully argued out.

"My dear fellow," said Hellard, at the end of an argument in which Ray-

nor had said that he felt sure that the pagans of the country must soon appreciate the merits of the new government, "I have been longer in this country than you have" (to be exact, he had landed about thirty-three days before Raynor), "and you can take it from me that the black man of Africa does not know what the word 'gratitude' means. If you help a Mahomedan with money, he merely looks upon it as his due, as a kind of tribute which it is his right to receive from the accursed Christian; and if you go out of your way to do a good turn to one of the pagans up here, why, he thinks nothing of it, and will be quite ready to stick you in the back next minute."

"I don't agree at all," said Raynor; "I don't know any thing about the Mahomedans, but I am certain that the people up here are very grateful for anything they get in the way of decent treatment. Some day or other perhaps you may come round to my views, and see that you are wrong in your ideas with regard to a native's gratitude."

"I wish I could think so," laughed Hellard in his rather superior, annoying way.

There was a rustling of dried leaves, and then a figure ran out from the shadow of the trees and came straight towards the two Englishmen. Hellard sprang up and instinctively put his hand on the small pistol which hung on his belt. But he saw at once that the native was a woman, and he laughed rather nervously as she fell at his feet, and, putting her arms convulsively round his knees, began to pour out a torrent of incoherent words.

"What on earth's the matter with the girl?" said Raynor, as he put his hand on her head gently.

"Some beast has been beating her, I suppose," replied Hellard, and called out to his interpreter. "Hi! Abdulla, come along and see what's up with this girl."

Oyid, for it was she, certainly presented a piteous appearance as she clung to Hellard's knees, trying to make her story clear. Even the interpreter at first had some difficulty in understanding her, and it was only when he had at last succeeded in calming her fears as to the treatment she might expect from the white men that he was able to make out her story and let Hellard know what had happened.

"What a damned shame," cried Raynor impetuously, when he had heard the story, "and what a ridiculous custom: I vote we go at once and burn the village and catch this witch-doctor man. What do you say?"

"Well, we have only heard one side of the story," replied Hellard, who rather prided himself on his judicial qualities. "I think that we had better wait a bit. But it might be as well to send a few men to try and catch some of the people who, the girl thinks, are pursuing her."

Raynor agreed, and promptly despatched half a dozen men along the path by which Oyid had come, with orders not to be out long, and to come back sharp if they saw no signs of pursuers.

The two young men had then to come to a decision as to what should be done with the girl. But Oyid was chiefly instrumental in settling this point. She absolutely refused to leave Hellard, to whom, and to whom alone, she said that she had given herself as a slave, for him to deal with as he chose.

After some discussion, therefore, Hellard agreed to her remaining under his protection. He was young, and could not help feeling rather flattered at the confidence which Oyid seemed to have in him.

"Tell her," he said, "that she can stay with us, and that I will visit her village on our way back and find out about her. In the meantime, see that

she gets some food. She can sleep by the fire in the camp."

Oyid, however, absolutely refused to fall in with this arrangement. Nothing would induce her to leave Hellard, who, she again explained, was from henceforth her lord and master. She was his servant, she would sleep only by his tent, and if this were not allowed, well, she would go into the forest and be eaten by leopards and hyænas.

This latter alternative was obviously impossible, and Hellard gave way to the girl's wishes, laughing rather sheepishly when Raynor accused him of blushing. It was arranged that Oyid should sleep under the outer flap of the tent, lying on a bed of grass and wrapped in a "tobe,"¹ one of several which Hellard was carrying with him as presents for the wives of Sheikhs.

Shortly afterwards the men who had been sent out by Raynor returned and reported that they had neither seen nor heard any people about. Then gradually all talking ceased and the camp grew quiet in sleep; and the still silence of the great African forest was only broken at intervals by the querulous call of a wandering hyæna, or the distant roar of some lion proclaiming his whereabouts to his consort. The single sentry slowly made his rounds, occasionally throwing a fresh log on the fire, thus lighting up the huddled sleeping forms of his comrades of the escort, the line of picketed mules, and the tents of the two white men, close under one of which the native girl now lay in a slumber made deep from exhaustion and the terror through which she had just passed.

III.

Next day, some time before the dawn, all was bustle and confusion in the little camp. The tents were struck and rolled up, beds were tied in bun-

¹ A roll of white cotton material.

dles ready for loading, animals were saddled; and then, just as the first pale light of the coming day began to show, the Englishmen got on their mules and headed the patrol as it started once more along the narrow native track.

Oyid took her place in the midst. Full confidence had not yet come to her, but the presence of twenty or thirty rifles—far more than she had ever before seen with one party of men—soon had a reassuring effect, and her terrified glances into the forest at the least sound on either side grew fewer, so that when the full light of day came she appeared perfectly contented and at home in her new surroundings. By ten o'clock the village was reached at which it had been arranged the mid-day halt should be made. The Sheikh came out to meet the party, bringing with him chickens and eggs for the white men and flour for the soldiers. The animals were unloaded, camp chairs and tables put up, and breakfast prepared. Hellard interviewed the Sheikh and his people, as they squatted in a semicircle round him, and explained the peaceable aims of the new Government, which, he said, had no intention of upsetting the customs of the natives.

"But," he continued, "there is one custom which must cease—and that is your system of fixing witchcraft on some wretched woman and poisoning her." He then told them the story of Oyid; but it was quite clear that the natives already knew all about her. There was a murmur of dissent when Hellard had finished speaking, and angry glances were directed towards the camp fire where the girl could be seen at work cooking. Then the Sheikh spoke.

"We are pleased at the coming of the new Government, and we see that you do not take our people as slaves or kill us as did the old Government; but the customs of our country have been

handed down from our forefathers, and we cannot alter them. The girl who is now with you is a witch, and she can never come back to us: if she does, she will surely be killed, as she deserves to be."

"Tell him," said Hellard to his interpreter, "that he must stop talking in that way, and that he has got to listen to what I say and do as he is told." He got up as he spoke and called to Raynor to come and have breakfast.

The natives retired a little way and, sitting in groups, talked eagerly with each other, and often looked towards Oyid. Noticing this, Hellard called to Abdulla, saying, "Go and hear what all the conversation is about." Abdulla went, and returned shortly to say that the natives were all discussing Oyid, and, he added—

"Better, my lord, keep good watch over that girl or some one will steal into our camp and kill her one night."

"Gad," said Raynor, who was sitting near, "we will burn all their villages if they do that. Don't you think, Hellard, all the same, that she had better sleep by the guard instead of by your tent?"

"Yes, certainly, I think that she ought to—or perhaps someone may stick a knife into me too," replied Hellard laughing.

Accordingly that night Oyid was ordered to sleep under charge of the guard; but this she absolutely refused to do, and begged to be allowed to continue to sleep by Hellard's tent.

"Are you not my lord and my master," she said, "and am I not your slave to fetch and carry for you? Why then send me away from you? No, let me stay where I am, so that should you want anything in the night I may go and fetch it: and perhaps, too, I may keep you from dangers and warn you of thieves, for I sleep lightly and I know this land."

"There is gratitude for you," laughed

Raynor when Oyid's words had been translated.

"Oh, she is afraid now," replied Hellard, "but you may be sure when we get back to headquarters I shall not see her again,—she will marry a soldier and settle down with him and forget all about the 'lord and master' business."

However, he let Oyid have her way, and each night she made her grass bed under the flap of his tent. She was so silent and unobtrusive that after a day or two he hardly even noticed her presence.

Four days later, on the way homewards, the patrol arrived at Oyid's own village in the afternoon, and camped there for the night. The Sheikh and a few men had come out as usual to meet the Englishmen, but this time there were no presents of eggs and chickens; and, in addition to this sign of unfriendliness, very few people were to be seen about the place.

"They do not seem particularly pleased to see us," said Raynor.

"No, they certainly do not," replied Hellard. "I suppose that they are still a bit annoyed about Oyid. I asked her yesterday if she would leave us here, but she made quite a fuss about it, and begged me not to hand her over to her own people. She told me that I should be a murderer if I did so, as they would be sure to kill her; so I suppose that she must come along back with us. However, I shall have a talk on the subject with the Sheikh."

He then made the usual speech to the few people who had assembled. Finally he came to the subject of Oyid and told the Sheikh that she had refused to go back to her people, and so would return with the patrol. When he had finished speaking, the Sheikh rose angrily, and said—

"That woman killed my child by her witchcraft and she must surely die.

Mayom, our witch-doctor, is never wrong, and he proved her crime clearly to us all. You must give her up to me. If you do not, she shall be accursed and die very soon in your Zareba, for God does not allow witches to go unpunished." There was a murmur of assent from the natives.

"Tell him," said Hellard to his interpreter, "that what he says is nonsense; that Oyid will be very happy in our Zareba and will live a long time; and that the sooner he stops listening to Mayom and begins to pay attention to the Government's orders the better it will be for him."

"How ridiculous these people are," he continued, turning to Raynor; "but I suppose they would not dare to try and murder her when she is at headquarters."

"I am not so sure about that," replied Raynor, as he lit a cigarette; "the Sheikh appears to be a revengeful sort of beast."

Certainly the gentleman in question looked particularly disagreeable as he continued to talk to the interpreter.

"What does he want now?" asked Hellard.

"He wishes to know how long you are staying," replied Abdulla. Hellard laughed.

"Tell him we shall not trouble his hospitality long. We leave early tomorrow, and say that I hope that he will sleep as well as I propose to do." He turned as he spoke and walked back with Raynor to the place where the table was already laid for dinner.

"These people seem a bit annoyed," remarked Raynor a little later, "so I propose an extra sentry for to-night."

"A good idea," replied Hellard, who was rather relieved at the suggestion, as he was himself feeling a little nervous. "Where will you put him?"

"Oh, I shall divide up the camp into two halves," answered Raynor, "one

sentry to each half. I will tell them to watch your tent especially," he added with a laugh, as he got up from dinner to make the necessary arrangements.

Hellard smoked for a little while after his companion had left him and then he went to his tent. As he entered it he noticed that Oyid was curled up on the ground at the foot of his bed, instead of being in her usual place outside the tent.

"I suppose that she is afraid of some one of her old friends coming and taking her away," thought Hellard, as he undressed. He examined the little pistol which he always kept loaded, and put it as usual, at his side under the cork mattress. Then he lay down and tucked the mosquito-net securely in all round him. The camp was silent, except for a little low talking in the direction of the soldiers, and it was not long before white men and black were wrapped in sleep.

Oyid had not stirred, and Hellard had thought her asleep: but she was keenly awake, listening to every sound and full of an undefined fear.

And what of Mayom? From the moment when he had realized that Oyid had escaped his vengeance he had secluded himself from the people of the village. During long hunting walks in the forest he had brooded over his wrongs and turned over in his mind many plans of vengeance. His pride, too, had been seriously ruffled, for some of the young men of the village had openly laughed at him, telling him that he was no use as a witch-doctor, for what was the use of his proclaiming a woman a witch if he was unable to bring her to justice?

And now that he found that Oyid was under the protection of a white man, apparently in happiness and safety, within only a few yards of the place in which he himself had prac-

tically sentenced her to death, he was seized with a wild longing for revenge and a desire to kill both her and the white man, whose wife he felt sure she must be. Cost him what it might, he was determined to carry out his murderous intentions that very night, and so show the villagers that it was hopeless to try and escape from penalties which he had ordained.

When the night arrived, therefore, he stripped himself of the bit of bark cloth which was his only covering, and carefully oiled his whole body with sesame oil, for thus it would be very difficult for any one to hold him should he by chance be caught by the soldiers. Then he carefully sharpened his long double-edged knife and glided silently and cautiously towards the camp.

With little difficulty he drew near, and crouching in the shadow of a large tree endeavored to locate the tent in which he had heard that Oyid and the white man slept.

A flicker from the camp fire showed him the outline of the tent, but it also disclosed to him the form of a sentry standing close by with a fixed bayonet. It was, however, a very dark night, and everything was in Mayom's favor—for a slight disturbance amongst the mules, which were picketed about fifty yards from the tent, attracted the sentry's attention, and he went away towards them to see what was the matter.

Mayom seized the opportunity, and, bending low, stole rapidly towards the tent. The flaps at each end were tied back, but inside the tent all was darkness. Mayom, however, could just discern the big white mosquito-net round Hellard's bed. The moment for his revenge had come: an exultant, savage joy swept over him: he rose to his full height and advanced a step, ready to strike and to kill. And then suddenly, with a wild scream, some strong, fu-

rious body hurled itself against him.

It was Oyd. After several hours of wakefulness she had at length fallen into a light sleep, only to wake with a start to see the form of a man standing in the tent doorway. With unerring instinct she knew that it was Mayom come to work his vengeance and to kill the man who had saved her life. Without a moment's hesitation she sprang upon Mayom as he stepped forward. A frantic hope surged through her brain that even at this critical moment, when death was so near her protector, she might yet be able by some means to guard him until he could defend himself.

The struggle was short. With a savage curse, Mayom struck once and then again, and Oyd sank heavily to the ground. But she had been in time. At her first cry Hellard had been roused, and, tearing through his mosquito-net with pistol in hand, was just in time to see the girl fall, and the form of a man springing towards the tent-door. Without taking aim he fired shot after shot wildly at the retreating figure; but the darkness befriended Mayom, who, in a few seconds, was in safety in the gloom of the forest.

And then Hellard turned to see the body of the girl who had saved his life. He knelt on the ground and lifted her head, resting it upon his

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knee, calling frantically for a candle to be brought.

The camp was now thoroughly roused, and all crowded to the tent. Raynor forced his way in, carrying a light. It was then seen that Oyd had received two terrible wounds, and that Mayom's knife, which had been broken off at the handle by the force of his second blow, was still embedded in the girl's side.

"She is dead," groaned Hellard, but at his words Oyd opened her eyes, and looking up into his face whispered a few words. Abdulla was bending over her listening.

"What does she say? Quick, tell me," said Hellard excitedly.

There was a faint shiver over the body, and then it was apparent to all that Oyd's troubles were over and that she was dead.

Abdulla answered slowly: "She said, my lord, 'You saved my life: now I have saved yours: I am glad, oh, my master.'"

Hellard rose. He was dazed, stunned. He was young, and had never before seen red death.

"And yet you said that these people did not know what gratitude was," muttered Raynor, and his voice had a curious choking sound in it as he spoke.

"My God, forgive me for my thoughtless words," said Hellard slowly.

Roger Cheyne.

THE RUSSIANS AND THE FINNS.

The Russian Empire is being assailed on the one hand by revolutionary Nihilism, on the other hand by the growing forces of education and enlightenment. It is held together partly by the natural fear of all who have anything to lose from disorder—who prefer bad government to anarchy—partly by the sheer brute force and menace of au-

thority, backed by immense forces of military and police. Stolypin, the Prime Minister, represents a compromise between absolutism and constitutionalism. He might, perhaps, have swept away the Duma, but he has preferred to mutilate it and use it. There has been a certain moderation not untinged by Liberalism in his domestic

and foreign policy, which makes us at times inclined to wonder whether he may not be an instrument in the gradual improvement of Russia. But the glimpses of hope and sunshine are overshadowed by many threatening clouds. According to some reports, revolutionary leaders are returning to the country, and another gigantic plan of campaign is being hatched for the overturning of the Government. The political exiles, it is said, have converted Siberia, and the political prisoners who are being released have not been converted into loyalists by their captivity. In Russia, as in most countries, reformers fall into two types—those who wish to proceed gradually, and by peaceful means, and those who want to reconstitute society by violence. The second section are mightily aided by the attitude and policy adopted by the Russian Government in its dealings with the subordinate races and nationalities.

We propose to illustrate this from the case of the Finns. But let us first glance at the racial subdivisions of this vast Empire, for until these are comprehended it is impossible to judge clearly of the policy known as Russification. Putting on one side the Georgians and the Armenians in the South-East, and the Jews (who are everywhere), the principal races or nations of European Russia are:—

Numbering
Roughly.

The Great Russians	60,000,000
The Little Russians	25,000,000
The White Russians	6,000,000
The Poles	8,000,000
Lithuanians and Letts	4,000,000
Finns, Esthonians, &c	6,000,000

The Russians proper, called the Great Russians, comprise practically the whole population of Central Russia, and the term Russification denotes a conscious effort by the Government to make all its subjects think, speak, and

feel like Great Russians. The Little Russians, or Ukrainians, known in Austria as the Ruthenians, predominate in most of the Dnieper and Don provinces. The so-called White Russians predominate in Minsk and in several other Bielorrussian provinces, and Kovno has a majority of Lithuanians. Russian Poland is inhabited by Poles and Little Russians, of whose mutual antipathy the Government makes full use. In the Baltic provinces the leading people are still mostly Germans—landlords, tradesmen, shopkeepers, &c., but the bulk of the population in Esthonia on the South of the Gulf of Finland speaks a dialect of Finnish. The people are called Esthonians, and are developing a national culture, with a national theatre at Reval. Livonia and Courland are populated by Lithuanians, a fierce race of intractable peasants, who resented the oppression of the landlords by acts of great atrocity during the late revolution. Riga is the chief Lithuanian town, though its merchants are mainly German. The Lithuanians speak a tongue akin to that of the Letts. The Finnish or Ugrian stock originally spread over the whole North of Russia, including St. Petersburg. Many of them have been absorbed by the Russians and now speak Russian, but dialects of Finnish are still spoken from Helsingfors to Archangel, as well as in Esthonia, and also by Ugrians along the Urals, and by the Ostjaks around Tomsk. Then there are scattered tribes of Tartars and Mongolians, Jews almost everywhere, Armenians, Georgians, Greeks, &c., but the Armenians and the Georgians are the only nations besides the Finns, the Esthonians, the Letts and Lithuanians, the Little Russians, and the Poles, who can be said to demand Home Rule. As a matter of fact, there has long been, and still is, going on a real process of Russification; that is to say, an amalgamation of Russian peasants and colonists

with all the less civilized tribes. The result is not exactly Russian, but it extends the use of the language, and increases the likelihood of Russia holding more or less together, with the Great Russians as predominant partners in some future federation. The attempt to Russify by force has, of course, the exactly opposite effect; it accentuates cleavages and develops sentiments of nationality, dissipating all feelings of loyalty to the Tsar and his Government.

Looking at these racial antipathies within the borders of European Russia it would clearly be the policy of the Central Government to conciliate by every possible means the affections and interests, not only of the Russians proper, but of the other half of its subjects. Unfortunately for itself, it has pursued another plan, a plan which could be safely, if not wisely carried out by the Prussians towards Danes, and Poles, and French, three comparatively small sections of the population. "Scientific" Russification may be said to have started with the destruction of the German University of Dorpat a generation ago. This brutal outrage may have pleased the worst elements of the various Slavonic nationalities; but, strange to say, the attempt to crush out German culture has been accompanied by a systematic oppression of the Slav races also, especially of the Poles and the Ruthenians. Of the dogged enmity of the Lithuanians and Letts we need not speak, nor of the attitude of the Georgians, which came clearly to light when the Tsar's throne was shaken by the convulsions of 1905. The one bright spot in the policy of St. Petersburg was Finland, where Russia, for the best part of a century, respected the State rights and constitutional laws granted at the conclusion of peace with Sweden in the year 1809. Happy, indeed, were the results. The Finns were perfectly loyal and friendly.

They long regarded the Tsar as their protector, and the proximity to St. Petersburg of the most contented part of all his dominions gave a real security and stability to the Russian Government; indeed, it had far more to fear from the Russians proper than from the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy. All this was ended in 1899 by the Bobrikoff régime, which united all Finland, Swedes and Finns alike, in passionate resistance to the lawless incursions of Russian bureaucracy. In the crisis of 1905 the blunder was rectified, and the rights of the Finns were restored. But during the last two or three years the Bobrikoff policy has been renewed, cautiously, indeed, and with subtle offers of an insignificant and useless representation in the Duma in return for the loss of their laws, their rights, and their self-governing institutions. Enough has already been done to make the whole population of Finland feel instinctively that the St. Petersburg Government is their enemy. Friendly Governors who understand the Finns have been dismissed. The Finnish Senate has been Russified, and made the tool of the autocracy. The finances have been shockingly mismanaged. The laws and customs of the country have been violated, and a heavy burden has been imposed on the Finns without their consent, in lieu of military service, which St. Petersburg is afraid to exact. The sympathy of England has been strongly exhibited both in Parliament and in the Press, and it is, perhaps, no accident that this latest outrage was postponed until after the adjournment of the House of Commons. It has just been announced that the Russian Government is about to seize a small but rich portion of the Province of Viborg in Finland, and annex it to the Province of St. Petersburg. The restoration of Viborg to Finland was made by the Tsar Alexander I. in 1812, in order to complete and crown

the liberal policy by which he had granted to Finland a tolerable system of self-government under its own laws and constitution. It is stated that this startling aggression is not a mere proposal of M. Stolypin's, but that it has been passed by the Council and confirmed by the Tsar. A committee of bureaucrats, it is said, including the Governor-General of Finland, has been appointed to draft a formal law of annexation for presentment to the Duma in October, in accordance with an Imperial law of last summer, which has no constitutional validity, because it has never been accepted by the Finnish Diet. It is believed that this move of M. Stolypin's is a calculated attempt to distract the Duma from the path of internal reforms and this may be the case. If pursued, it is a policy that will certainly endanger and probably destroy the Anglo-Russian *entente*, and is likely to produce far greater internal difficulties than those which it is intended to avoid. If the advisers of the Tsar

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would even now halt and reconsider their position we believe they could still arrive at a compromise with the Finns which would be of high advantage both to the great Empire and to the small State. It is possible that the Finnish Diet might even acquiesce in a liberal contribution as well as in some small loss of territory in the neighborhood of St. Petersburg if the Tsar and his Government would abandon their hopeless and impolitic attempt to Russify the Finns by the destruction of Finnish self-government. St. Petersburg should remember that the prosperity of the last two years must soon come to an end. Once more financial aid will be needed in Paris and London. But diplomatic and financial aids cannot be divorced from popular sympathies, and it may prove a fatal mistake for the Russian bureaucracy if by breaking faith with Finland it antagonizes the democracy of Great Britain.

MUSIC IN TRANSITION.

This is the lethargic season, when our only musical resources are comedies in which the music is thin and promenades which are often impenetrable. Hence those of us who are compelled to remain in town are apt to spend our time upon the more or less unprofitable discussion of academic subjects. Now any entertainment which might be derived from such an occupation is sadly marred by the prevalent fondness for truisms of the most threadbare descriptions. Truisms are worse than a vice—they are a disease of the mind. But of all those which are thorns to our gray matter, none is more irritating than that which consists in saying that music or painting, or for that matter the art of the colfure or the cuisine, are in a state of transi-

tion. There is no art which is not in a state of transition. There never was, save those which are now known as lost arts. Even where an art has become almost stationary, as the classic art of China, there are influences at work which are constantly evident to the truly critical mind.

In connection with music the truism is particularly irritating. It is as if one gave forth as a critical dictum that a child of tender years is growing. By music we understand two forms of art. One, the simple art of rhythmically contrasted sound, otherwise melody, is probably far older than speech itself. Primæval man strung inarticulate sighs and grunts together to express appetite or digestion long before he invented words which fitted the gamut

of his simple emotions. The other art, a belated—a cynic would say, a posthumous—child of the former, is the complex art of simultaneous and contrasted melody, and it is scarcely more than five centuries old. Five centuries in the history of an art is a mere fragment of time. In fact, viewed from the pinnacle of the centuries to come, our complex art of music is probably not far removed from baby-talk. Of course there is considerable growth from Dufay or Lassus to Richard Strauss or Vincent d'Indy, but is not the growth of a child more rapid than the transition from adolescence to maturity?

The very people who are most proud of their discovery that music is in a state of transition would probably be the least able to give an intelligible account of what is actually taking place. Not that it is easy to do so—far from it. Indeed, the time to write a critical account of the interesting half-century from 1860 to 1910 will be some generations hence. Still the study of the past, and better still, of the older arts, furnishes a wealth of analogies, and some elementary conclusions can reasonably well be substantiated. Take the question of technique, the method of writing, the *écriture musicale*. The laws of technique in any art are of two kinds—dogmatic and empirical. But empirical laws, that is to say, those derived from actual accomplishment, are scarce in the early days of an art precisely because accomplishment itself is scant. Hence it is that primitive art is always richest in dogma. Things are forbidden not because they have been tried and found wanting, but for the same reasons that an Alpine climber is kept from an unexplored path. As the art grows, the young idea begins to scatter. At one end of the range you have the orthodox traditionalist who inherits, at the other the nonconformist who evolves, a creed.

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Each reacts on the other. The nonconformist of one generation supplies the tradition for the next, and bit by bit dogma is tested in the fire of experience.

The confusion, if confusion there be, is caused by the minor composers who have neither the power to evolve a creed nor the patience and concentration to assimilate one. These are the men who flounder. They have always been plentiful, and, if we are inclined to consider our own age more than generously supplied with them, it is because they are so near to us, and withal so persistent in their claims, that we miss much valuable art in the intolerable din. Stated another way, the elements are composed at one end of men who are developing the alphabet handed down to them, at the other of men who are evolving new alphabets containing some new variants of phonetic resource and between them there is a surging mass which knows no alphabet at all and makes a virtue of it.

There are other undercurrents, among which the most conspicuous is that which drives music into contiguous fields, from which it inevitably recolls. If at one moment it becomes too intellectual, there will be a reaction towards the music of pure sensation. If it becomes too literary, a young prophet will arise who will make it architectural. And all of them are right, in their several ways. Painters have little praise for the literary picture, but that does not detract from the great masters of genre. Even the decadence of an art produces classics. The decadence of an art! Is there really any such thing? The end of a phase is generally marked by either megalomania or preciosity, or both, but by that time another phase has begun. There is at most decadence of a phase, but not of an art: and in that sense Strauss is a decadent and Debussy a primitif.

E. E.

TITLES AND DEMOCRACY.

The *Star* of recent date contained an interesting and well-reasoned article on the use of titles in a democracy. The organ in which it appears has a just claim to be listened to upon such a question. It may be trusted to give us nothing but the pure milk of the Radical word. The hallowing influence of capital protects it from any admixture of Socialism. Yet, as Keble beautifully observes—dreaming perhaps of the journalism of the future—it does, not

Strive to wind itself too high
For sinful man beneath the sky.

Nothing that is human is wholly alien to its all-embracing arms. It has a place in its heart even for the sport of kings, and does its best to call even the poorest to share in it by means of judicious counsel and the publication of the latest odds. Here, then, if anywhere, we may look to see titles set in their proper place and estimated at their proper value.

The writer of the article need not have been at the pains to argue that titles do not "contradict the root idea of equality which underlies democracy." Whatever may be the connection between the two, it is only a connection at starting. Democratic reasoners have contended that all men are born equal, but the wildest of them has never maintained that they remain equal all their lives. Equality of opportunity does not imply equality in the use of opportunity. According to "L. C.," titles as they are now bestowed are intolerable on three grounds: They are gained in wrong ways; they do not die with the men whose merits supplied the occasions for their being given; and they are "used mostly to foster artificial social distinctions." With one portion of this censure we are wholly in agreement. The part that money plays in

the bestowal of peerages has of late years become notorious. The purses of the men selected for this honor are freely drained to keep the channels flowing by which the party funds are mainly fed and the freedom of the constituencies interfered with. But the fact that a title is, in the first instance, a personal distinction does not necessitate the conclusion that "hereditary titles must disappear." We are not now concerned with defending them; it is enough to point out that the case for them does not rest on any assumption that the abilities or virtues of the first peer descend by a natural process to his successors. It is founded rather on the importance of keeping one part of a bicameral legislature free from the influences which sometimes give disproportionate power to a single party or a single mood in the popular Chamber. This object may or may not be secured by the hereditary principle, but the wish to secure it supplies the argument on which it can be best defended. When, therefore, we are told that for a man to inherit the title "viscount"—it is interesting to note how instinctively the Radical imagination jumps over the first round in the ladder of honor—"will be as unthinkable as to inherit the title K.C. or M.D." he misses the distinction between peerages and strictly professional titles. In theory a peer has hitherto been created—in practice, unfortunately, very different motives have sometimes governed the creating Minister—for qualities which are supposed to make him a fitting member of a legislative Chamber. A man is made a K.C. on purely professional grounds—often, indeed, mainly on his own belief that to take silk will bring him more briefs. The degree of M.D. follows on a purely professional examination. It tests a man's knowl-

edge of medicine and medical practice, but it proves nothing as to his fitness for doing the work of a Second Chamber. The writer himself points out this distinction, but he does not see, or does not care to admit, that it is fatal to his contention that the argument against making professional titles hereditary is equally applicable to hereditary peerages. The fact is that the original creation and the hereditary continuance must be justified on distinct grounds. The general merit of the man on whom the title is conferred explains the one; the uncertainty that still prevails as to the superiority for working purposes of an elective over an hereditary Second Chamber explains the other. As regards artificial social distinctions, they are, as a rule, more fostered by great wealth than by hereditary titles. Will anyone maintain that there is greater social equality in America than there is in England? Certainly that is not the conclusion suggested by American novels or by the testimony of those who know the United States. A long purse is quite as efficacious in creating such distinctions as any patent of peerage.

Let us assume, however, that titles as we know them have been abolished, as is consistent with a democratic society, and see what reasons the writer in the *Star* brings forward for recreating them on a new basis. The love of distinction, he says, is almost universal. "The finest type of man may, it is true, be above this feeling." The best work in the world may be, and probably is, done "without thought of reward, tangible or intangible." But the State—at all events the democratic State—must not restrict itself to the services of its highest and most unselfish members; its aim should rather be to "employ the talents of all for the common good." The love of being distinguished by some external mark above the unmarked crowd is a motive that appeals

to the majority of mankind, and the practical statesman will do well to make use of it. The really mischievous element in titles will disappear when those who bear them are simply "those members of the community whom the community has thought fit to honor by gratifying a very human liking for distinction. Even if it is called vanity no harm is done by public recognition of it." If it should be objected that this particular quality hardly deserves this special honor, the writer has his answer ready. The vanity he singles out is a very unusual vanity. No matter what a man may have done for himself, for his family, for his business, he will not get one of the new titles. They will be reserved for men who have done service to the community without thought of self. To make a big fortune is its own reward, and he who makes it must be contented to be known to the end of his life by the name with which he started. That "a certain amount of public benefit may have been thrown off in the process" will count for nothing. It will be a mere by-product. We have nothing to say against this limitation except that it is likely to lessen the number of titles. Every day we hear people wondering why more rich men do not build new museums, or new hospitals, or set on foot new and costly processes of research. There is often a very considerable measure of fame to be earned in this way, but the prospect does not seem to have any large attractiveness. The instances in which money is thus spent are commonly to be explained by some special pleasure involved in laying it out on this particular object. Mr. Carnegie would have built no more free libraries than he has built already if the title of "viscount" had been sounding more loudly in his ears with each fresh cheque that he signed. "L. C.'s" conception of a title has something really heroic about it.

It is not to be a mere decorative addition to a money payment; it must be something to take the place of one. It must be earned by service "that does not pay the doer." The titled author must have no "fat royalties" standing to his credit; the titled inventor must not have grown rich by his patents; the titled manufacturer must have found no buyers for his goods; the titled financier must have remained a pauper. In fact the Chamber, if there be one, which is to receive the members of the new order will have failure written over its door. We do not envy the Minister to whom it will fall to distribute the distinctions "L. C." would like to see created. We can even imagine the resentment which the offer of the honor would sometimes arouse. Will an author often care to have it proclaimed that no one reads his books, or an inventor that no one has thought

The Spectator.

his patent worth pirating? Will he not rather be inclined to return the title to the Minister with an assurance that the modest but honorable success which has already rewarded his labors disqualified him for the consolation prize which the Minister has offered him with the best intention, but in ignorance of the real facts? We give the writer in the *Star* every credit for his project. It may be that in some democracy as yet unborn titles will be the coveted guerdon of those whose labors have earned no other. But in the democracies that exist we greatly fear that the new titles would shortly sink to the level of the old ones. They would be given either to men who had already become famous or to men who were willing to spend the fortunes they had made in swelling the balance-sheet of the party from which they received the honor.

THE RAVENS THAT FEED US.

The general strike is over, and England, it is said, has had a shock. But has she really? I wish that she had, but I hardly think the excitement of the strike can be described as a shock. What we suffered was more in the nature of a slight jar to that almost incurable complacency with which we regard the physical machinery of existence. The majority of people have suffered nothing and have felt no kind of pinch. Some people, it is true, felt that when the supply of ice failed for a day or two they were face to face with the naked realities of existence, for the form in which the farthest ripple of this great surge of industrial turmoil reached many a man was a lukewarm drink instead of a cold one. The newspapers have benefited by having a grave and exciting subject to occupy what is generally the silly season;

and people sitting at table all over England, breaking bread and munching mutton chops, have read columns and columns about the danger to the national food supply. But to most Englishmen the disturbance was mental and not physical. For a day or two, it is true, the train service was disorganized, but in a way far from disagreeable to the general public. For the ordinary clerk or business drudge such adventures as walking along the railway line, going to business by road instead of by rail, being late without reproach, and perhaps riding in unwonted taxi-cabs, gave a holiday feeling to life; the general disturbance of routine and vague sense of excitement in the air must have been a veritable godsend, and a welcome variation of his miserable, monotonous grind; and such shortcomings of transit and even

of catering arrangements as he may have experienced had something of the quality that is half the attraction of a picnic or camping-out. It was change; it was adventure; and with a faint thrill many a half-stupefied soul must have felt that in some vague and mysterious way he was being brought appreciably nearer to the heart of life.

The idea that the actual supply of food—of bread and of meat, of bacon and potatoes and of things in tins—was threatened, or could ever come to an end, was never really grasped by the man in the street. It floated vaguely in the air; it was mentally received and (although in quite an academical way) discussed by the man in the street; and such phrases as "national larder" and "food supply" were momentarily added to the vocabulary of commonplace conversation over breakfast bacon and in the morning train; but the idea was never really grasped, taken home to the intelligence, and visualized in definite personal images. It is very hard indeed for the Englishman to imagine any such disaster. He lives in a country that does not produce its supplies, but buys them; he is not dependent on his garden, but on the nearest stores. The ark of England, floating on the high seas, is daily supplied by messengers from every quarter of the compass. The food is handed in at the window by hands invisible to the great company that sits at table within, eating and drinking, all unconscious of the miracles that are performed in their service. And so the sense of security grows; if one messenger falls by the way, another takes his place; if one merchant fails or disobliges us, we transfer our patronage to another. Famine cannot strike us; we are insulated from the physical disasters of the globe; we read of blights and droughts in this country or that, famine and pestilence that bring millions to starvation; but nothing ever happens

to us. When the crops that supply us fail in one part of the world, what we need is always somehow obtained in another. We believe in our hearts that, whoever else goes short, England's belly will be full; the ravens will feed us.

The ravens do feed us; prompt, obedient ravens, hurrying hither and thither on our business over all the world; smoky, black-plumed ravens of the high seas, converging upon us day and night, and perching on the rocky rim of our island; sooty ravens of the land, that come flapping and screeching through the darkness, bringing food from the shore to our very doors. The ocean tramps and goods trains are the humble ministers to all the poetry and romance of our island life. The sorrowful, rusty tramp nosing her way through surges, sliding in between the pier-head lights of harbors and gliding out again in gray, rainy dawns, blistered by tropical suns, sheeted with winter ice, and always coming home again to England, burrowing along towards the Lizard, or the North Foreland, or the South Stack or St. Abb's Head; and the goods train, more unlovely still—sooty, clanking chains that go dragging through the land day and night, halted for an hour at a time by some wayside signal-box to let the lordly pleasure trains go by, broken up, marshalled, reformed, banged about in switching-yards, and bearing, nevertheless, the very elements and essence of our existence—there they are, and every one takes them for granted. They flutter their black wings through the night; our table is spread in the morning; the ravens have fed us.

This assumption that everything necessary for life goes on automatically, providentially, is, I think, especially a London characteristic; and it has been London that has been most startled by the shock or jar that recent affairs

have given to the assumption that all fundamentals of life go on of their own accord, and will go on for ever. We have no invasion to remember, which would remind us that there is such a thing as a food supply, and that it can be diverted; and, the world being our source of supply, ordinary people are not affected by the failure of supply either in this or any other country. Nothing short of a world failure could affect the decently-off person here—provided all our internal machinery goes on as usual. But once let that machinery, exquisitely adjusted as it is, be interfered with, and the whole balance is upset; we are promptly affected more than any other people in the world. A forty-eight hours' strike set us talking as though London were near being starved out; and the repose of a few carriers of coal nearly upset the London water-supply. In short, the ravens that feed us are mortal. They are not miraculous creatures that darken the air at the bidding of a supernatural power; they can be shot on the wing, they can be trapped or snared, and their precious burdens impounded; they are, moreover, capable of caprice on their own account, and have it in them to go to roost in a body, head under wing, and bring death instead of life to us.

This strike will have been well worth while if it has awakened comfortably-off people to a realization of simple facts like this. It is almost incredible how ignorant, or, at any rate, how unconscious most people are of the machinery that feeds them. If you were to ask the guests at an ordinary dinner party to account for the presence on the table of the fish, birds, fruit, and flowers, to describe how and whence they came, seven out of ten would be hopelessly at fault, unless the establishment happened to be on such a scale that all these things were produced on the host's own property.

From the larder to the stores, and from the stores to the market, is as far as the ordinary person's imagination will take him. The realization that all these supplies are dependent on a highly-organized service of trains and ships, running to a daily time-table far more complicated than Bradshaw, and therefore extremely sensitive to the human quantity that enters into all such machinery, is of the first importance to the Englishman who would rightly grasp the conditions in which he lives. The progress of a goods train, say, from Liverpool to London, far from being a sordid and unattractive thing, might, properly told, read like a romance, with its thousands of various commodities destined for so many different places and purposes on the way; its bringing of things that are lacking, and taking away of things that are produced in superfluity, its takings-up and settings-down, its exchanges, its distribution of a crate of eggs to this place and a ton of gunpowder to that—they all have part in the balance of that complex internal machinery by which we make ourselves independent of our own seed fields, and dependent on those of the wide world.

Many a man in England, not as a rule deeply concerned with the machinery of party politics, as in these last weeks had politics translated for him into a language which he cannot but find both easy and profoundly interesting to read. A political policy that founds itself on theories is sure sooner or later to be confronted with facts of the most ugly and dangerous kind; and the powerlessness of the present Government to stay the whirlwind they are reaping is ominous indeed. I wonder if those who legalized "peaceful picketing" knew that they gave into the hands of a few demagogues the food supply of London as a weapon to be used when they wanted further concessions; or if they realized that in the

same hands the ravens that had peacefully fed them might suddenly be turned into birds of prey?

In the Scandinavian mythology the ravens were the birds of destiny. The
The Saturday Review.

ravens that feed England are fateful too, and those who control them hold the destinies of England in their hands.

Filson Young.

MR. CHESTERTON IN VERSE.*

Mr. Chesterton, whether he writes prose or verse, has always something to say, and he usually says the same thing in both. In this ballad, which is concerned with King Alfred's fight for the civilization and the faith of Europe against the outer heathendom of the Danes, he presents his ideas of the difference between civilization and barbarism, between Christianity and heathendom, as he has often presented them before. The ballad-form in which he presents them is only a kind of disguise which he has put on; and it is easy to recognize him in his ballad-monger's dress. But just because he is acting a part, he will not let us forget it for a moment. He shows us that he knows all the tricks of the trade, and his ballad is more extremely like a ballad than any ballad could be that was a form of expression natural to the maker of it. Mr. Kipling himself is not more violently primitive than Mr. Chesterton, and it is curious that two writers should adopt the same manner for the expression of ideas so different. The reason no doubt is that both desire to be quite sure that they believe something perfectly simple, and therefore make a violent effort to express their faith simply. In both cases the violence of the effort sometimes distracts our attention from what is expressed, and in this ballad it destroys most of the illusion of the story. We are aware all the while

that Mr. Chesterton is trying to explain his ideas to us, and we see him behind all his Danes and Saxons.

That is the fault of the poem; but it has many merits. In the first place it is all interesting—a rare thing in long poems and even in short ones. The ideas, though they may be too intellectual to be expressed as simply as Mr. Chesterton tries to express them, are his own, based on his own experience of life and reading of history. History is alive for him, and he makes it seem alive to us, as where at the beginning he speaks of the fall of Rome:—

For the end of the world was long ago—

And all we dwell to-day
As children of some second birth,
Like a strange people left on earth
After a judgment day.

For the end of the world was long ago,
Where the ends of the world waxed free,

When Rome was sunk in a waste of slaves,

And the sun drowned in the sea.

When Cæsar's sun fell out of the sky
And whoso hearkened right
Could only hear the plunging
Of the nations in the night.

Alfred lived at the time of worst confusion after that fall when the idea of Europe was almost swept away, and Mr. Chesterton tries again and again through the mouths of different persons to tell us what it was that he fought for. Here, for instance, it is

* "The Ballad of the White Horse." By G. K. Chesterton. (Methuen, 5s.)

the Virgin, appearing to Alfred, who speaks of the inner security of Christianity:—

The men of the East may spell the stars,
And times and triumphs mark,
But the men signed of the Cross of Christ
Go gaily in the dark.

Then Alfred, singing in the Danish camp according to the old legend, tells the Danes, who have sung their joyless heathen songs of fate, about the same inner security and why it is:—

That though you hunt the Christian man
Like a hare on the hill-side,
The hare has still more heart to run
That you have heart to ride.

Mr. Chesterton makes a typical Roman, Saxon, and Celt fight for Alfred at Ethandune, and he shows his historic imagination in his descriptions of them. Here is the account of the Roman:—

The long farm lay on the large hill-side,
Flat like a painted plan,
And by the side the low white house,
Where dwelt the southland man.

A bronzed man with a bird's bright eye,
And a strong bird's beak and brow,
His skin was brown like buried gold,
And of certain of his sires was told
That they came in the shining ship of old,
With Caesar in the prow.

His fruit trees stood like soldiers,
Drilled in a straight line,
His strange stiff olives did not fall,
And all the Kings of the earth drank ale,
But he drank wine.

At the end Alfred prophesies how "in some far century, sad and slow," the heathen will come back in a new guise to threaten faith and civilization again. When he does this the voice of Mr. Chesterton is clearer than ever and
The Times.

we know that he is telling us of our present sins.

Not with the humor of hunters
Or savage skill in war,
But ordering all things with dead words,
Strings shall they make of beasts and birds
And wheels of wind and star.

When is great talk of trend and tide
And wisdom and destiny,
Hail that undying heathen
That is sadder than the sea.

In fact, it is denial of free will and a belief in mechanism that produces heathens. It is all very well put, but a great deal of it makes one want to argue with Mr. Chesterton, or at least to ask him what exactly he means. That is the worst of controversial poetry. It never can go quite deep enough into controversy, and seems to be more sure than any thought can be. Mr. Chesterton in this last passage is really arguing, and it is not fair argument to make Alfred the mouth-piece of your opinions. It also raises the question whether Alfred would or could have thought like Mr. Chesterton, and that is not an irrelevant question. For he is trying to strengthen his opinions with the support of Alfred. He says, "This is what a great and good man would think in the wisdom gained by long experience of the best and the worst; and it is open to those who disagree with him to answer, No, that is not what he would think. Those are the opinions of a modern literary man, not of Alfred." But here again we touch the whole weakness of Mr. Chesterton's method. With all his fire and acuteness and eloquence he cannot persuade us that he is telling of things that ever really happened. He speaks for himself throughout; but, as we have shown by our quotations, he often speaks very well.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

"The Red-Hot Dollar" gives its title to a collection of stories originally published in the *Black Cat*. The adjective would not be malàpropos if applied to almost any one of the collection. They are short stories—very short—of mystery, adventure or the bizarre, told with a peculiar detachment and in some cases considerable technical skill. Except for the last story, to the sentimentality of which the author's style is hardly suited, the tales are sufficiently entertaining. Jack London, who is a personal friend of the author, H. D. Umbstaetter, furnishes a characteristic introduction. L. C. Page & Co.

To the three volumes already published in the "Friendship series," Hugh Black adds this year a fourth on "Happiness" (Fleming H. Revell Co.) It resembles the earlier volumes in spirit and temper and in helpful purpose. Its several chapters consider happiness as a right and as a duty, the sources from which it springs, its abiding secret, the art of happiness, its different grades, the shadow which rests upon it, the foes which menace it, and its very heart and essence. More than most contemporary writers, Hugh Black understands the art of presenting the highest ideals in a form adapted to modern needs and questionings. A serene and sunny temper, a discerning and understanding mind, and an attractive literary style combine to give his religious essays a strong appeal. The book is attractively printed on wide-margined pages with decorative borders.

"The Dilemma of Engeltie" is laid in the New Netherlands in the year 1702. Engeltie's betrothed quarrels with her father, who forbids him the house,

though the wedding-day has already been set. The old Dutchman insists that she shall be married to some one at the time appointed and allows her to choose a bridegroom from among a dozen youths of the neighborhood. The real object of her affections having apparently disappeared, Engeltie finds herself with the task of going non-committally through the weeks of wedding festivities in the forlorn hope that some chance may yet bring things right. This is her dilemma; how her lover circumvents her father and finally wins her makes the slender plot. Some interesting customs and scenes are described and the story interest holds fairly well. The author, Emma Rayner, does not, however, make her people real. L. C. Page & Co.

The story of "When Woman Proposes" by Anne Warner is indicated by the title. A young, rich and beautiful widow sees at a dance a man whom she decides she must marry. She does not wish to be conventionally introduced to this "Captain in the Xth," so fate conveniently has him injured at her very door. The captain is desperately ill for many months during which he receives the best of care and falls in love with the fair young widow. In that time also, a bill for the increase of army officers' pay, introduced by him into the legislative body of the country, has been tabled. The story from this point is absurd, extravagant, but not quite farcical enough. Nothing seriously written was ever quite so silly as the heroine's speech to the national legislature after she has tied up the nation in order to make the Captain marry her. The main contention, as outlined in the preface, is that woman for love will do anything in politics.

As a theory it will no doubt make a certain appeal. Little, Brown & Co.

When Anne Warren, a young American girl, spends a winter in Rome she meets an Italian of wonderful charm and interest who becomes "Her Roman Lover." He is attracted by her quiet beauty and her, to him, unusual qualities of mind. They become engaged, each one conscious all the time of racial differences to be bridged; the struggle between the ideals of a person whose standard is that of right and wrong and those of a person whose standard is feeling is described with a directness, a poignancy and inevitableness that hold the reader. Eugenia Brooks Frothingham, the author, has her characters well in hand; the girl's point of view is consistently held and she is very real. The Italian's traits as well as his charms are cleverly indicated though he is a "woman's man" in the sense that he is studied entirely objectively. There is nothing extraneous in the book; interest centres always on the affairs of the two. It is a pleasure to read a novel so workmanlike, restrained and in its way so strong. Houghton-Mifflin Company.

The four one-act dramas contained in Cale Young Rice's latest volume show their author's mastery of a difficult form of poetic expression, and will add to his reputation as a writer of unusual promise. The scene of "The Immortal Lure," which gives the volume its title, is laid in a forest in the Ganges, and its subject is a young hermit beguiled in all innocence by the wiles of a dancing-girl; "Giorgione" imagines the revenge of the painter on a mistress whom he believes to be false; in "Arduin," a Provençal of the fifteenth century, who is convinced that ten years' study of Egyptian alchemy has given him power to raise the dead, mistakes the betrothed of

his nephew for his risen wife; in "O-umè's Gods" is presented the struggle between a Jesuit priest and a young Samurai for the faith of a Japanese girl. Tragedies all these, and with unpleasant possibilities, but handled with restraint and dignity which make them a grateful contrast to much poetry of the day. Doubleday, Page & Co.

Certain phases of English life are so far apart from American experience as to render any peep into them of interest. Victor L. Whitechurch, whose former novels have all dealt with the clergy of the Established Church, has taken for his latest a Cathedral Town and the "priests" in the Close. He calls the tale "Concerning Himself" and frankly undertitles it "The Story of an Ordinary man." (The Baker Taylor Co.) The hero, Gerald Sutton, a boy of ordinary ability, allows himself to be beaten by a cleverer and less scrupulous lad both in the struggle for a scholarship and for love. Both he and Gray, his rival, come from the class of "gentlemen," both are destined for the clergy. Gray marries the heiress and Sutton, after passing through a rather usual career, becomes a country parson and weds a delightful girl. The book is entrancing because of the humor of the telling, the rare insight into character, the charm of many of its people, the unusual turns of the plot, and the vivid descriptions of a little known aspect of life.

In "A Book of Dear Dead Women" Edna Worthley Underwood groups a number of fantasies, reminding one at times of Poe's. Evoked by the music of the Saraband, in "The Mirror of La Granja"—of such exquisite purity and lustrous depth that it refuses to reflect material bodies and reproduces only dreams and spirit forms—appears, to a chronicler of our own day, the Moor-

ish love of Philip the Second. In "The Opal Isles," in a palace of marvellous beauty, upon a long, narrow, ivory bed, within the hollow curve of an ivory sickle, the ship-wrecked traveller finds—is it a woman wrapped in lustrous gauze, or is it a mammoth opal that bears a woman's form? In "The House of Gauze" are met the Lady Melodia and the Lord of Mozart. "The Painter of Dead Women," by means of a powerful poison which arrests decay, is making a unique art-gallery in which to preserve for posterity the most perfect specimens of the age in which he lives. Written with unusual command of descriptive language, these stories, with as many more, will interest lovers of the weird and occult. Little, Brown & Co.

A delightful story, and one to give pleasure to widely differing tastes, is "The Soundless Tide," by F. E. Crichton, author of "Peep-in-the-World" and "The Little Wizard of White Cloud Hill." The leading characters are a retired army officer living on an impoverished Irish estate which still has comfort and distinction, his clever, cynical wife, her niece Patty and his cousin Randal, but the obvious love-affair which the experienced reader suspects in the opening chapter is complicated by unforeseen difficulties and keeps his interest on the alert to the end of the three hundred closely-printed pages. Patty—high-minded, warm-hearted, spontaneous and sincere—is a heroine of unusual piquancy and charm, and Randal as fine a young fellow as one often meets in fiction. In the background, and providing material for chapters which might easily be published by themselves as sketches of rural life, is a group of villagers whose humbler joys and sorrows are described with a mastery of both the pathetic and the humorous that recalls the Findlater sisters or even Katharine

Tynan herself. The two parallel plots move in leisurely style, and give time for reflective and descriptive passages of noticeable brilliancy. The Baker Taylor Co.

The latest volume in T. Y. Crowell Company's beautifully illustrated edition of Thoreau's works is the first volume which the author wrote: "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers." As one turns these pages, which Clifton Johnson has decorated with thirty-three full-page illustrations from photographs, it is pathetic to remember that when the book was written it went a-begging from publisher to publisher, was published at last at the author's expense, and was painfully paid for by labor as a surveyor at a dollar a day, three-fourths of the edition remaining meanwhile unsold in the author's cellar. Clifton Johnson's rare genius as an illustrator has never found a more congenial field for its exhibition than in following Thoreau's leisurely wanderings upon this tour and picturing the scenes through which he passed, most of which, so far as natural features are concerned, are but little changed. The book itself is one of the most characteristic of Thoreau's writings, whimsical, meditative and deeply imbued with a love of Nature and a keen appreciation of her various moods. It is sixty years since Thoreau, after receiving into his cellar the copious "remainder" of the first edition of this work, boasted with melancholy humor that he had a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which he had written himself; but the charm of the book grows with the years for those who bring to it a sympathetic mind.

On the notable list of Englishmen whose versatility finds literary material in the far-off lands where their administrative talents are exercised, Sir

Hugh Clifford's name stands high, and his travel sketches and studies of race-problems have been among the most striking contributions of recent years to Blackwood's Magazine. Readers of *The Living Age* will recall his "Sally" with its sequel "Saleh," and his sketches from Indo-China. It is of Cambodia that he now writes in the novel called "The Downfall of the Gods"—not the modern Cambodia under its French Resident, but Cambodia of the 13th century with the Khmer empire nearing its fall. A grim, tragic story it is, with its ant-like swarms of sudras toiling under the threatening shadow of the mighty Angkor Wat, and its sleek Brahmins holding them enslaved by the terrors of the supernatural which they alone have power to evoke. The hero is the son of a low-caste woman and a priest; the plot turns on his love for one of the temple-girls; and the decisive part is played by an old man whose passion is architecture and who believes that he has discovered the secret of the arch. The story is well told and many of its incidents are of dramatic interest, but the discriminating reader will find himself valuing the book chiefly for its descriptions, which are of remarkable quality, and do, indeed, seem to give glimpses of "the East—the real East, mysterious and very ancient, waiting with her immense and measureless patience." E. P. Dutton & Co.

Harold Begbie, the author of "Twice Born Men" and "Souls in Action," has published a novel called "The Shadow" which has as its motif the same idea of the value of influence that underlies his essays. A wild younger son of a

good English family marries in Canada a young girl just from the convent, and begins life again on a prairie farm. Their son is about eight years old when the father dies, and the almost penniless mother goes with little Christopher to her husband's home in England. She finds his relatives cold, disagreeable and hard. Life with them becomes so intolerable that though Christopher is now heir to the estates, she cuts loose entirely, and goes with him to London, there to support them both. She is employed at first in a manicurists' shop, but later finds congenial work as a mission visitor. She brings up the boy as nearly as possible directly under her own supervision. An unscrupulous tutor persuades him, when he is old enough to wish to go to Paris to study art, to accept from his aunt a certain income, on the specious plea that he may thereby reconcile his mother and his father's family. Of his life in Paris, his final escapade, and his mother's distress the outcome is her death. The last hundred pages of the book treat of his remorse, repentance and final peace through the help of a saintly old clergyman and the love of his daughter Rose. The story lacks at once the distinction of style and the insight and profundity of thought of the author's psychological essays. As a novel it is not convincing nor always consistent. Some of the important characters are mere shapes, others mere mouthpieces of emotion. The delineation of the fine, highly spiritual mind of the mother suggests, however, the power of the author's other work. Fleming H. Revell Co.